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THE PREACHING
TO
THE SPIRITS IN PRISON

1 PETER III. 18-20

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LONDON
T. WESTON, 5 PATERNOSTER ROW
1900

BS 3799

P9K3

THE PREACHING

TO

THE SPIRITS IN PRISON

IT may interest, and I trust also profit, the reader, if we not only examine this scripture but review the questions raised on it for ages. Here many a Christian finds perplexity, rejecting what does not fall in with the analogy of faith, yet unwilling to doubt what seems intimated by the letter of the word. He is ready to suspect himself of failure in spiritual intelligence, and to question whether there might not be some unconscious insubjection of heart and mind to the perfect revelation of GOD. The chief at least of the speculations in which men of reputation have indulged in ancient and modern times will claim a notice, in the hope of satisfying the believer that human thoughts are ever worthless, and that divine writ is clothed by the Spirit with self-evidencing light and power for all who have their hearts opened to the Lord and are self-judged in His sight.

It will be seen, too, by a full enough examination,

that the most exact criticism in the details of the clauses confirms the general scope derived from the context as a whole, and that grammatical precision points with equal force in the same direction. Thus from every point of view the truth comes out with a fulness of proofs proportioned to the closeness of our investigation, once we have the right object and aim of the passage clearly ascertained and held firmly before our eyes. There is no ground in the passage for any action of Christ in the intermediate state for saints or sinners, nothing to hold out a hope for those who die in unbelief and their sins. How could there be, if all His words are true?

The true text is *ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν*,* *δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ἡμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ Θεῷ, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ † πνεύματι, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν, ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ‡ ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ, εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι, § τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὀκτὼ ψυχαί, διεσώθησαν δι'*

* *ἀπέθανεν* ("died") is the reading of *Σ A C*, more than a dozen cursives, Vulg., Syrr., Memph., Arm., Aeth., with several Greek and Latin fathers; while the common text is supported by *B K L P*, the mass of cursives, and some of the same fathers.

† *τῷ* before *πν.* is the received reading on the strength of a few cursives, contrary to all the uncials, the great majority of the cursives, and all the Greek fathers, not even excepting Epiphanius who elsewhere does give the article. There need be no hesitation in accepting the anarthrous form, which cannot mean "His" Spirit.

‡ *ἀπεξεδέχετο* is unquestionably correct, of the uncials *K* alone being adverse according to Matthäi, and of the cursives not one supporting the reading of Stephens, Beza, and the Elzevir editions.

ὑδατος. "Because Christ also once suffered for sins, Just for unjust, that He might bring us to GOD, put to death indeed in [the] flesh but made alive in [the] Spirit, in which also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, disobedient aforetime when the long-suffering of GOD was awaiting in Noah's days while an ark was being prepared, in which few, that is, eight souls, were brought safe through water."

Though the original text is not doubtful but sure, the interpretations of ancients and moderns are for the most part precarious and misleading. Why was this? It may be helpful, and it is instructive, to note the unusual uncertainty of the ancient versions. The Greek is linguistically plain, the construction grammatically clear: why, then, should the rendering be variant and confused but by ideas imparted from without? So early was the tendency to bad interpretation instead of faithful translation. Thus the Vulgate has, without authority, "erant" in verse 19, and "qui" in 20, but the atrocity of "expectabant Dei patientiam," which misled so many Romanists into error in

It seems to be a mere conjecture of Erasmus, who in his first edition gave ἀπαξ ἐδέχετο (so K), in the rest ἀπαξ ἐξεδέχετο. In fact, it is hard to comprehend how the adverb could be used with the imperfect, though it might be with any other tense. It is remarkable that though Erasmus read the blundering ἀπαξ in the text of all his five editions, he gave the correct word in his notes, even before it was published in the Complutensian Polyglott.

§ The question between ὅλγοι (Σ A B, six cursives, Origen, Cyprian, Augustine) and ὀλγοι (C K L P, most cursives and fathers) is more delicate, and less decided. It is the only case in which the text as given above differs from the Complutensian edition.

the Middle Ages and to the present day; for so it stands in the Tridentine standard of authentic Scripture, impudently false, yet unabashed in its open inconsistency with the passage itself. The Pesch. Syr. was similarly unfaithful in the first errors of the Latin, renders ϕ . by "Sheul," and falsely paraphrases the rest thus, "while the long-suffering of GOD commanded that he (Noah) should make the ark upon the hope of their conversion, and eight souls only entered therein and were saved in the waters." The Philox. or Harcleian Syr. is much nearer the truth, as it avoids the error in 19, though not correct in the slighter case at the beginning of 20. As to the Memphitic V., Wilkins gives "living" for "quickened" in 18, and its rendering of 19 as "In this to the imprisoned spirits also He went, He evangelised," which is sufficiently loose, though not in quite the same way. But verse 20 is well translated except in giving a finished instead of a continuous force to the preparation of an ark. Again, the Aeth. adds "Holy" to "Spirit" in 18, and like Pesch. Syr. adds "held" or "shut up" to 19. The Erpenian Arabic is everywhere free, and seems peculiar in "departed to the spirits which were shut up," which goes beyond and verges into interpretation, if not misinterpretation. One may remark here that $\pi\omicron\rho$. in verse 22 has $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \omicron\upsilon\pi\alpha\nu\omicron\nu$, whereas in verse 19 there is a careful avoidance of $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\delta\omicron\nu$ or any equivalent, which has been overlooked by those who have argued for the force of 19 from 22. In the Armenian there is little or nothing that calls for notice here.

Nor is the meaning doubtful. The apostle of the circumcision is eminently plain and practical, fervent and forcible. He does not, like Paul, penetrate into root principles or rise into the vast circle of the divine counsels, "wherein are some things hard to be understood." He is not like John, profoundly contemplative on the divine nature as revealed in the Son of God. Peter is so simple and direct, that the interpreters err greatly who fancy that his words convey what their own speculations import. He would not have the Christian suffer for evil but for well-doing; and this, not for moral reasons only, but in a touching appeal to Him who suffered atoningly on the cross:—"Because Christ also once suffered for sins, Just for unjust ones, that He might bring us near to GOD." Let it be ours, objects of His saving grace, to suffer only for righteousness and for His name. If it cost Him everything here up to death, GOD vindicated Him by resurrection, "put to death indeed in flesh, but quickened in Spirit" (or, as in 1 Tim. iii. 16, "justified in Spirit"); in which [Spirit] also having proceeded He preached to the imprisoned spirits, disobedient as they were aforetime when the long-suffering of GOD was waiting in Noah's days. As the Holy Spirit raised Him from the dead,* so not personally but in the same Spirit also He went and preached to the spirits in prison because of their disobeying the word in Noah's time, when preached by him.

* This is far from excluding the Father's part (Rom. vi. 4), or yet the Son's (John ii. 19; x. 18); but it adds the Spirit's agency: all the Godhead shared in it.

It is an evident and striking reference to Gen. vi. 3, "And Jehovah said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for he indeed is flesh; but his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." So long would His long-suffering wait; and in result only the patriarch's family were brought safely through. Thus the persons who then perished, and whose spirits are in ward for judgment at the end of all things, are no less clearly defined than the time in question, and the specific sin of insubjection to the Divine Spirit which wrought in Noah's preaching. The more accurately the words are examined, in textual criticism or in grammar, the more certainly it will be found that in strict exegesis they admit only of the meaning here assigned, and this in the full harmony of the New Testament with the Old.

The connection and scope is evident. The apostle is exhorting the believers to a patient life of suffering so as to fill with shame those who vented their spite on their good behaviour in Christ. Who could gainsay that it was better, did the will of God so will, to suffer while doing well than doing ill; and this because Christ also suffered (but He suffered once, once for all) for sins? This should be enough: we should suffer not for sins, but only for righteousness or for Christ's name sake. It was His to suffer for us, this once and for ever, Just for unjust persons (for such were we), that He might bring us to God. It is ours to suffer at times especially, but in principle always while in this present evil world. The *καὶ* connects Christ and us as suffering, but the contrast is as striking as it is morally

suggestive. To understand with some *περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν* as a point of comparison between Him and us under such a junction is to miss the reasoning utterly, not to speak of failure in reverence towards the Saviour in that work which stands far above all comparison. This ought to have been too plain to need further reproof from *δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων*, where His solitary and unapproachable place is set out. It was His alone thus to bring us near to GOD. The participles that follow tell us how this was done: "Put to death in flesh but made alive in [the] Spirit."

But here a very important question arises. The article is certainly to be eliminated: what is the bearing of its absence on the meaning? If the articles were inserted, *τῇ σαρκὶ* and *τῷ πν.*, these would be the contrast of the two parts of our Lord's being as man, the outer and the inner; were it *τὴν σ.* and *τὸ πν.*, it would be the utterly false thought that His Spirit as man was the object of quickening. The anarthrous form points to the *character* of the acts specified; but so far is it from denying the agency of the Holy Ghost in the quickening spoken of, that the presence of the article would be more consistent with Christ's Spirit as a man. No doubt, when it is intended to present the Holy Spirit objectively or extrinsically, the article is required and, as far as I can mark the usage, the prep. *ἐν* or *ὑπό*; it is excluded where the manner of His action is meant. On the other hand, wherever the spirit either of Christ as man or of any other is to be expressed, the article is

indispensable, as may be seen in Matt. v. 3; xxvi. 41; xxvii. 50; Mark xiv. 38; Luke x. 21; John xi. 33; xiii. 21; xix. 30; Acts xix. 21; xx. 22; 1 Cor. v. 3, 5, etc.

Again, the following cases without the article clearly mean the Holy Spirit, but characterising the action rather than specifying the person, though He must ever be a person: Matt. xxii. 43; John iii. 5; iv. 23, 24; Rom. viii. 1, 4, 9, 13; 1 Cor. xii. 13; Gal. iii. 2, 15, 16, 18, 25; Eph. ii. 22; iii. 5; v. 18; vi. 18; Col. i. 8; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Peter iv. 6; Rev. i. 10; iv. 2; xvii. 3; xxi. 10. The attentive reader of these instances will see that the turning-point is not the presence or absence of a preposition, as some scholars have thought. Words after a preposition follow the ordinary rules. Only, after prepositions capable of usage with a statement of manner (as *κατὰ, ἐκ, ἐν, κ.τ.λ.*), the anarthrous form is of course more common. Thus *ἐν πνεύματι* would mean in the power of the Spirit, the manner of being, or of being carried, built, justified, or of blessing, preaching, or whatever else may be in question.

Hence the meaning here seems to be that Christ was put to death in respect of flesh, but quickened or made alive in respect of Spirit, in the power of which He went and preached to the spirits in prison. The *ἐν ᾧ* falls in with the Holy Spirit still more as that wherein Christ acted in testimony. It is not said that He went to the prison and there preached to the spirits; but that in the power of the Spirit He

went and preached to the spirits that are there. For it is certain that *τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν* can signify "that *are* in prison" as naturally at least as "that *were*" there: only the necessity of the context could really justify the latter sense. But if the context favour "that are," it is the simple unforced bearing of the phrase. And that it does favour it should be plain from *ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε ὅτε, κ.τ.λ.*, which points to an antecedent time of guilt as the ground of their being now imprisoned.

It may be doubted then whether quickened "by the Spirit" best gives the meaning of the apostolic statement: for that would most naturally suppose the Spirit as an exterior agent. Still the anarthrous construction, as is certain from the numerous places cited, does not at all exclude the Holy Spirit: only it expresses the manner of the quickening, not the personal agent. But the thought of His power is conveyed by the phrase that follows, *ἐν ᾧ*, wherein Christ is said to have gone and preached, etc. Thereby it is pointedly contradistinguished from *πορευθεὶς* in verse 22, which is not qualified by *ἐν ᾧ* or *ἐν πνεύματι*, but left in its strict sense of a personal change of locality to heaven. Thus it is excessively rash to say that the rendering of the English version here is wrong either grammatically or theologically, though it is more correct to cleave as closely as our language permits to the Greek style of expressing "Spirit" as the character rather than agent of the quickening of Christ, though agent too He was beyond doubt.

Bishop Middleton wrote with great force on the insertion of the article, but he was not equally successful in accounting for its omission. Prepositions he treated as exceptions to rule, and anarthrous cases like *σὰρξ*, *πνεύματι*, as practically adverbial. Hence in our passage, he held the apostle to mean that "Christ was dead carnally but alive *spiritually*"; as indeed he thought would flow from *τῷ πν.* if the article had been authentic. (*Doctrine of the Greek Art.*, p. 430, Rose's Ed., 1855.) The only difference is, he thought, that by retaining the article we destroy the form of the antithesis between *σ.* and *πν.* But instances already given show how imperfect this able treatise is in requiring either the article or a preposition to accompany *πν.* in the gen., dat., or accus., in order to mean the Spirit of God. Romans viii. 13, to which he himself refers, refutes his position.

Here Dean Alford, who is so strong against "by the Spirit" in 1 Peter iii. 18, translates the same word exactly in the way condemned: "but if *by the Spirit* ye slay the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led *by the Spirit* of God, these are sons of God." So on Gal. v. 5, Alford expressly remarks on *πνεύματι* "not 'mente' [Fritz] nor 'spiritually,' Middleton, al., but by the [Holy] Spirit, [reff.] as opposed to *σ.*," the very rendering he afterwards treats as wrong grammatically and theologically. Again, on verse 16 he particularly observes that *πν.* without the article may and does here mean "by

the Spirit" [*i.e.* of GOD]. His reason, probably after Winer or the like, is invalid; for it is not because it is a sort of proper name, but because it is employed *characteristically*. There is no need to multiply proofs against the comments on πν. in 1 Peter iii. 18—proofs equally at least against Middleton. Consequently Barrow, Hall, Leighton, Pearson, Ussher, etc., the divines who denied the applicability of the passage to Christ's descent to hades, were not mistaken, as thinks Dr. E. H. Browne, the late Bishop of Ely. They contend that the true meaning of the text is that our Lord by the Spirit in Noah preached to the antediluvians, who are now for their disobedience imprisoned in hades.

"This interpretation of the passage," says the Bishop, "depends on the accuracy of the English version. That version reads in the eighteenth verse, 'quickened by the Spirit.' It is to be noted, however, that all the versions except one (the Ethiopic) seem to have understood it 'quickened by the Spirit': and it is scarcely possible, upon any correct principles of interpretation, to give any other translation to the words. If, therefore, we follow the original, in preference to the English version, we must read the passage thus: 'Christ suffered for us, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to GOD; being put to death in the flesh, but quick in His Spirit; by which (or in which) He went and preached (or proclaimed) to the spirits in safe keeping,' etc." (*An Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, etc.*, 1868, pp. 94, 95.)

I confess to surprise at such a rendering of $\xi\omega\sigma\pi\omicron\upsilon\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ $\pi\pi\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\iota$ as "quick in His Spirit." For, first, though there is an occasional looseness in the LXX., it is certain that the New Testament strictly and exclusively employs $\xi\omega\sigma\gamma\omicron\nu\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ for keeping alive, $\xi\omega\sigma\pi\omicron\iota\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ for making alive. Secondly, is it not singular to reason from a non-authentic lection as the original? And the Bishop of Ely (see note, p. 94) knows that the best critics reject the article before $\pi\upsilon$. If absent, it is impossible for $\pi\upsilon$. to mean "in His Spirit."

Besides, the resulting theology is as strange as the grammar; for he proceeds, "There is, it will be observed, a marked antithesis between 'flesh' and 'spirit.' In Christ's Flesh or Body He was put to death. Men were 'able to kill the body,' but they could not kill His soul. He was therefore alive in His Soul, and *in* or *by* that He went to the souls who were in safe custody ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\phi\upsilon\lambda\alpha\kappa\eta$); His Body was dead, but His Spirit or Soul went to their spirits or souls. This is the natural interpretation of the passage; and if it ended here, it would contain no difficulty, and its sense would never have been doubted. It would have contained a simple assertion of our Lord's descent to the spirits of the dead." To my mind such a sense must seem far below scripture. For what a poor inference that men could not kill Christ's soul! Why, they could not kill the soul of the least of His saints, nay, nor of the most wretched of His enemies. Indeed, "kill the soul"

in any case is a singular phrase to use of anyone, most of all to feel it worth while denying it in the case of our Lord Jesus. How different His language! "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear. Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." "He was therefore alive in His soul" is a feeble platitude for the issue of the clause; as surely as it supposes a wrong sense given to *ζωοποιηθεῖς*, not to speak of the confusion of the soul with the spirit in a way foreign to all exact speech. The interpretation, therefore, would be in every respect unnatural even if it ended here.

When we follow, the gulf widens which severs truth from error. "But it is added that He not only went to the spirits in safe keeping, but that He went and *preached* to them. Hence the passage has appeared to savour of false doctrine, and hence its force has been explained away. But the word 'preached,' or 'proclaimed,' by no means necessarily infers that He preached either faith or repentance. Christ had just finished the work of salvation, had made an end of sin, and conquered hell. Even the angels seemed not to be fully enlightened as to all the work of grace which GOD performs for man. It is not likely then that the souls of the departed patriarchs should have fully understood or known all that Christ has just accomplished for them. They indeed may have known, and no doubt did know, the great truth that

redemption was to be wrought for all men by the suffering and death of the Messiah. But before the accomplishment of this great work, neither angels nor devils seem fully to have understood the mystery of it. If this be true, when the blessed Soul of our crucified Redeemer went among the souls of those whom He has just redeemed, what can be more probable than that He should have ‘proclaimed’ (ἐκήρυξεν) to them that their redemption had been fully effected, that Satan had been conquered, that the great sacrifice had been offered up? If angels joy over one sinner that repenteth, may we not suppose paradise filled with rapture when the Soul of Jesus came among the souls of His redeemed, Himself the herald (κήρυξ) of His own victory?”

It is certain, however, that the preaching of which the apostle here speaks was addressed neither to angels nor to devils, nor yet to patriarchs, but expressly to those who did *not* hearken to it in the days of the divine long-suffering, just before the deluge. The text itself therefore dissolves the airy fabric we have just seen, and proves that the preaching was addressed, like all other proclamations of the truth, to faith, but, as in this world habitually, met with unbelief and insubjection of heart in those who heard. Indeed, in p. 96 Dr. B. confesses that the proof-text is not favourable to the point they would make it prove. “The only (?) difficulty in this interpretation of this difficult passage, is in the fact that the preaching is specially said to have been addressed to those who had

once been disobedient in the days of Noah. That many who died in the flood may yet have been saved from final damnation seems highly probable, and has been the opinion of many learned divines. The flood was a great temporal judgment, and it follows not that 'all who perished in the flood are to perish in the lake of fire.' But the real difficulty consists in the fact that the proclamation of the finishing of the great work of salvation is represented by St. Peter as having been addressed to those antediluvian penitents (?), and no mention is made of the penitents of later ages, who are equally interested in the tidings."

The really important thing for all to weigh is that this difficulty is created by the interpretation that Christ went in His soul and preached to the spirits in the separate state. The text itself speaks of His preaching to such as had been once disobedient in Noah's days. The only unforced inference is that these are in prison because of their disobedience of old, not that being in prison they obeyed Christ's preaching in hades. Nor is there the smallest hint that, having perished in that great temporal judgment, they were alleviated by any subsequent preaching of our Lord, but rather that they are kept waiting for a still more tremendous, because an eternal, judgment before the great white throne. They despised Noah, the preacher of righteousness, yet not with impunity, for the flood took them all away; but worse remains than the flood brought in upon the world of the

ungodly. They are kept for judgment like such angels as sinned.

“It must be confessed,” continues Dr. B., “that this is a knot which cannot be easily untied. Yet should not this induce us to reject the literal and grammatical interpretation of the passage, and to fall back upon those forced glosses which have been coined in order to avoid, instead of fairly meeting and endeavouring to solve,” the acknowledged difficulty. To my conviction there is nothing to untie, where one cleaves to the strict language of the apostle and the real bearing of his argument. For he is exposing indirectly the Jewish unbelief, which would have nothing but a Messiah visibly reigning in power and glory, to the exaltation of the chosen people and the confusion of their enemies. The faith of the believing or Christian Jews in Him, dead, risen, and gone to heaven, exposed them to the derision of their brethren after the flesh, who felt not their sins, and cared not for the grace of God displayed in redemption by the blood of Jesus. He had preached, not as present, but rendering testimony by virtue of the Spirit. Hence the importance of pointing to His testimony by Noah, a testimony to man as such, like the gospel of Christ; for it was before the days of Israel or even Abraham, and the most striking epoch and also period of preaching to men in all the Old Testament.

This is as we saw confirmed by Genesis vi. 3, where Jehovah said, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be

a hundred and twenty years." Then the ark was preparing, the space of God's long-suffering; and "the waters of Noah came," and man was destroyed from the face of the earth. And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man; for the days of the gospel are pre-eminently of testimony, as were those before the deluge, during which Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house, and became heir to the righteousness which is by faith. Again, he was not a believer only, but a preacher of righteousness, more emphatically than we find it said of any other in Old Testament times. The preaching was in the power of the Spirit, and hence attributed to the Spirit of Christ, who is ever the active person in the Godhead, as is well known in each visitation of man before the incarnation, preparing both the way and mind for it. Compare "the Spirit of Christ" which was in the prophets of old (1 Peter i. 11).

This then would encourage the believing Jews, as it might well admonish their despisers. It is a question of preaching to the world still in the Holy Spirit, not yet of the public reign and government of the Lord. So Christ wrought by the Spirit then; and so He does now. As the flood came on those heedless of the preaching of old, so it will be when He comes in judgment, for He is ready to judge quick and dead. And if they taunt the believers with being so few compared with the masses that believe not, let them not forget that but eight souls were then saved

through water; which figure now saves, baptism, on one side of it death, and on the other, resurrection. Christ has passed through actually for us, as we also in spirit by faith, having a good conscience before GOD through Him who is not only risen but at the right hand of GOD in heaven, where the highest and mightiest of creatures are subjected to Christ; who is therefore as full of assured security for His own as of irremediable ruin for all who slight the warning.

In thus tracing the links of the apostolic thought and word, I am greatly mistaken if the least strain is put on any part, as without doubt the true text and the exact version have been already given. It is not so with those who have flattered themselves that they adhere most closely to the words of the apostle and their plain sense.

Thus when Bishop Middleton considers the true meaning to "be dead carnally, but alive spiritually," almost every word is misrepresented. For, to bear such a translation, the sentence should have been *θανὼν μὲν σαρκικῶς, ζῶν δὲ πνευματικῶς*, though one might call such a statement absurd and heterodox. I deny that we must or can render *θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι* in any such fashion. Bishop Browne is as wrong in adopting such a thought in the note to p. 95, as he is in giving "quick in His Spirit" in the text of p. 95, or in expounding it as Christ alive in His soul, *in* or *by* which He went to the souls *ἐν φ*. All this in my judgment is as loose in grammar as in philosophy, if they allude to this; and as faulty also

in theology, as it has not the least coherence with the context or the scope of the apostle's reasoning.

If Peter too had meant to say that the soul of our Lord went to these other souls, he must have taken a most circuitous and unexampled mode of expressing it in employing the phrase ἐν ᾧ, referring to πνεύματι just before. The statement, if not the interpretation, would be most unnatural. Taken as it stands for Christ's going and preaching in virtue of the Spirit by Noah to the rebellious antediluvians, it is in my judgment fully justified, were this necessary, by the Pauline phrase, καὶ ἐλθὼν εὐηγγελίσατο εἰρήνην ὑμῖν τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς. The latter is even a stronger instance; for there is no explanatory reference to πνεύματι ἐν ᾧ. Further, it is not a natural interpretation to take τοῖς ἐν φ. πν. as those who *were*, but who *are*, in prison, because of ἀπειθήσασιν ποτὲ ὅτε, κ.τ.λ., following, which very simply attributes their being in custody to their disobedience of old. There is no need nor just ground for joining ποτὲ with πορευθεὶς ἐκέρ., but with ἀπειθ., which marks off their unbelief at the preaching from the time when they were in prison. We are thus shown as plainly as words can that we here read of Christ preaching, not in person but by virtue of the Spirit, to those suffering the consequences of having been disobedient in the days of Noah.

Again, be it observed, the moral aim of this supposed preaching in the unseen world is as unsatisfactory as we have seen the grammar to be irregular and

the doctrine strange. For it supposes a preaching confessedly without either faith or repentance as its end; and it selects, in what seems the most arbitrary way, out of all the departed souls those spirits imprisoned because of their heedlessness, when the long-suffering of GOD was awaiting in the days of Noah.* To single out such wilful sinners, as the objects to whom Christ in the under-world proclaimed His triumph and their fully effected redemption, seems to be a statement as foreign to scripture as can be conceived, and equally ill adapted to impress their danger on such as now despise the preached word.

Bishop Horsley's Sermon on the passage, which is so warmly commended in Bishop Middleton's Treatise and in Bishop Browne's Exposition, appears to sober minds little worthy of confidence. Thus he affirms strongly that the English translation of $\xi. \delta\epsilon \pi\nu.$, though "a true proposition, is certainly not the sense of the apostle's words. It is of great importance to remark, though it may seem a grammatical nicety, that the prepositions, in either branch of this clause, have been supplied by the translators and are not in the original. The words 'flesh' and 'spirit,' in the original, stand without any preposition, in that case which, in the Greek language, without any preposition, is the case

* The careful student will notice that the original is not exactly rendered by the English translators and most others in this respect, that $\alpha\pi\epsilon\iota\theta\eta\sigma\alpha\sigma\iota\nu$ from the omission of the article must needs be a predicate, and not an epithet describing or defining the spirits. The meaning therefore is not "which were," etc., for this requires $\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$, but "disobedient as they once were when," etc.

either of the cause or instrument by which—of the time when—of the place where—of the part in which—of the manner how—or of the respect in which, according to the exigence of the context; and to any one who will consider the original with critical accuracy it will be obvious, from the perfect antithesis of these two clauses concerning flesh and spirit, that if the word ‘spirit’ denote the active cause by which Christ was restored to life, which must be supposed by them who understand the word of the Holy Ghost, the word ‘flesh’ must equally denote the active cause by which He was put to death, which therefore must have been the flesh of His own body—an interpretation too manifestly absurd to be admitted. But if the word ‘flesh’ denote, as it most evidently does, the part in which death took effect upon Him, ‘spirit’ must denote the part in which life was preserved (!) in Him, that is, His own soul; and the word ‘quickened’ is often applied to signify, not the resuscitation of life extinguished, but the preservation and continuance of life subsisting (?). The exact rendering, therefore, of the apostle’s words would be, ‘Being put to death in the flesh, but quick in the spirit,’ that is, surviving in His soul the stroke of death which His body had sustained, ‘by which,’ or rather ‘in which,’ that is, in which surviving soul, ‘He went and preached to the souls of men in prison or in safe keeping.’”

I have given this long extract, which clearly puts this able divine’s objections to the Authorised Version. Now without committing myself to the defence of what

is not quite correct, I have no hesitation in asserting that Horsley, by his own mistaken view, has diverged incomparably farther from the truth. We need not go beyond the Bishop himself and the passage in debate, where he gives a difference of shade to the two participles, which are quite as much contrasted with each other as their complementary datives. According to his own principle therefore, as the first means "put to death," the other should be "made alive," even if its uniform usage by inspired writers did not force one to the same conclusion. Why then did not H. carry out fairly and fully his own reasoning? Because it would have involved him in the result that Christ was not only put to death in the flesh, but *made alive in His own soul or spirit*. The good Bishop of course shrank from so portentous an inference, and was therefore driven to modify the antithesis, not in *πνεύματι*, but in an unnatural and unfounded interpretation put on *ζωοποιηθεῖς*, which even Dean A. explodes, who insists justly on "brought to life," instead of "preserved alive."

The truth is that Horsley did not himself seize the exact force of *σαρκὶ* and *πνεύματι*, still less the difference produced by *ἐν* in the beginning of verse 20. Christ was put to death in (*i.e.* in respect to) flesh, as a living man below; He was made alive in (*i.e.* in respect to) Spirit, as one henceforth living in the life of resurrection, characterised by the Spirit as the other by flesh, though Christ was not a spirit only but had a spiritual body. It is *not* His own spirit as man, which

is far worse than the English Version here, both grammatically and theologically. Grammatically it would demand $\tau\hat{\phi} \pi\nu.$, which is a reading unknown to the best copies and scouted by all competent critics; but even if diplomatically and grammatically legitimate, it would land us in the frightful heterodoxy that Christ died not merely in flesh but in spirit, and had to be quickened in the human spirit, which dies not even in the lost. Only the materialist conceives that spirit, if he at all allows of spirit, can die.

Further, if $\xi. \delta\epsilon \pi\nu.$ refers to the resurrection of Christ, it is harshness itself and out of all reason to suppose Him back in the separate state in the verse following, where Horsley takes $\epsilon\nu \hat{\phi}$ to mean in which surviving soul He went and preached to the souls of men in prison. But understand it as $\epsilon\nu$ means we should, that Christ also went $\epsilon\nu \piνεύματι$, not merely in character of Spirit, but in His power when He preached through Noah; and all is precise in grammar, correct in doctrine, clear in sense, and consistent with the context. When we are raised by-and-by it will be $\delta\iota\alpha \tau\hat{o} \epsilon\nuοικοῦν αὐτοῦ \piνεῦμα$, because of His Spirit that dwelleth in us. It was not suitable to Christ, so to speak of His resurrection. He was, when put to death, quickened $\piνεύματι$, denoting the character of His life in resurrection (not merely the agent), $\epsilon\nu \hat{\phi} \kappa\alpha\iota$ marking the Spirit's power in which, before He was thus put to death and raised, He went and preached to the spirits in prison, disobedient as they were once when, etc.

Who can wonder, therefore, that the Anglican divines in the 5th of Queen Elizabeth dropped the reference to this passage of Peter in Article iii., while they had inserted it in the 6th and 7th of King Edward the Sixth? Nor need we with Bishop Horsley impute it to undue reliance on the opinion of Augustine (Ep. 99 [164], Evodio), who was followed by some others of the Fathers in rejecting the superstitious idea of Christ's preaching in hades. The excellent Leighton, at a later day, was so far from seeing this to be the plain meaning of the passage that he does not hesitate to say, "They that dream of the descent of Christ's soul into hell think this place sounds somewhat that way; but, being examined, it proves no way suitable, nor can by the strongest wresting be drawn to fit their purpose."

On the other hand, the figurative explanation of τοῖς ἐν φ. πνεύμασιν is quite indefensible and uncalled for. The sense of sinners shut up in a prison of darkness while living on earth, whether in Noah's day or in apostolic times, whether of the Gentiles or of the Jews and Gentiles, must be rejected. Bishop Horsley, however, is as mistaken on his side when he avers that such passages as Isaiah xlix. 9, lxi. 1, refer to the liberation of souls from hades; they describe Jehovah's gracious work on the earth. Equally wrong is his idea that ποτὲ joined with ἀπειθ. implies that the imprisoned souls were recovered from that disobedience, and before their death had been brought to repentance and faith in the

Redeemer to come. Contrariwise the scope is that, having once on a time disobeyed when GOD's long-suffering was waiting before the deluge, they are in prison. In virtue (or in the power) of the Spirit Christ went and preached to such, by a preacher of righteousness, no doubt; but it is styled His preaching to enhance the solemnity of what was then refused, as it was also in Peter's day. These spirits were in prison as having once been disobedient thus and then; and GOD will not be mocked now if Christ's preaching in the Spirit be rejected and He be despised in His servants. Where would be the force of the few, that is, eight souls who were saved through water, if the disobedient mass, or any of them, were saved none the less though outside the ark?

Again, it is certainly a suicidal citation which H. makes from the beginning of Revelation xx. 13. For we know that the sea at that epoch will have none to give up but the unblessed and unholy, all the righteous dead having already been raised in the first resurrection. Nor is there the least reason from scripture to fancy that souls deceive themselves by false hopes and apprehensions after death, so that some should need above others the preaching of our Lord in hades. It is nowhere said that *thither* He went and preached. The spirits are said to be in prison, and this, as having once on a time been disobedient; but it is not said or meant that Christ went there and preached to them.

It is no question then of discrediting clear assertions of Holy Writ on account of difficulties, which may seem to the human mind to arise out of them. It is inexact interpretation, which produces endless confusion, leads too naturally into false doctrine, and has no connection with the passage any more than with the general tenor of revealed truth elsewhere. To put such a notion, based on a spurious reading, slighting the exactness of grammar, ignoring the nice distinctions of the phrases, and resulting in the most impotent conclusion spiritually; to put this on the same level "with the doctrines of atonement—of gratuitous redemption—of justification by faith without the works of the law—of sanctification by the influence of the Holy Spirit"; to say that, discrediting Christ's preaching in hades, we must, on similar grounds, part at once with the hope of resurrection, is more worthy of a bold or weak special pleader than becoming a grave and godly minister of Christ. To urge that its great use is to confute the notion of death as a temporary extinction of the soul, or of its sleep between death and resurrection, is certainly not to claim much from so wonderful a fact, if a fact. Whether scripture does not abundantly confute such dreary and mischievous dogmas of unbelief, without resorting to strange doctrine, based on a hasty and superficial interpretation of 1 Peter iii. 18-20, may safely be left to spiritual men who judge according to the word of God.

It is curious to see how an intrepid and strong-minded writer, such as Bishop Horsley unquestionably

was, commits himself to untenable statements,* once he leaves the lines of the Holy Spirit in scripture. "The apostle's assertion, therefore" (says he), "is this, that Christ went and preached to souls of men in prison. This invisible mansion of departed spirits, though certainly not a place of penal confinement to the good, is nevertheless in some respects a prison. It is a place of seclusion from the external—a place of unfinished happiness, consisting in rest, security, and hope, more than enjoyment. It is a place which the souls of men never would have entered had not sin introduced death, and from which there is no exit by any natural means for those who once have entered. The deliverance of the saints from it is to be effected by our Lord's power. It is described in the old Latin language as a place enclosed within an impassable fence; and in the poetical parts of scripture it is represented (?) as secured by gates of brass, which our Lord is to batter down, and barricaded with huge massive iron bars, which He is to cut in sunder. As a place of confinement, therefore, though not of punishment, it may well be called a prison. The original word, however, in this text of the apostle imports not

* Indeed, so far from agreeing with Bishop Browne that it is an "admirable sermon," I am surprised at the want of knowledge that Horsley displays, *e.g.* in respect of Calvin's views. For he imputes to his favourite author the doctrine of Christ's literal descent into Gehenna; whereas C. really held that Christ suffered on the cross the divine wrath due to sin, and that this is the meaning of His descent into hell—sound doctrine, though mistakenly attached to that clause of the creed.

of necessity so much as this, but merely a place of safe keeping; for so this passage might be rendered with great exactness, 'He went and preached to the spirits in safe keeping.' And the invisible mansion of departed souls is to the righteous a place of safe keeping where they are preserved under the shadow of GOD's right hand, as their condition sometimes is described (?) in Scripture, till the season shall arrive for their advancement to their future glory; as the souls of the wicked, on the other hand, are reserved, in the other division of the same place, unto the judgment of the great day. Now, if Christ went and preached to souls of men thus in prison or in safe keeping, surely He went to the prison (?) of those souls, or to the place of their custody; and what place that should be but the hell of the Apostles' Creed to which our Lord descended, I have not yet met with the critic that could explain."

The careful reader will perceive, indeed any one when it is pointed out, the immediate departure from scriptural sense and accuracy. For the apostle does not assert "that Christ went and preached to souls of men in prison." He speaks not of human souls generally, but only of those characterised by disobedience of yore, when Noah the preacher of righteousness prepared an ark to the saving of his house. This makes all the difference possible; for there is no reference whatever to the invisible mansion of departed spirits as a whole, still less to the special place of seclusion for the good. These last are in fact excluded

by the language and the thought of the apostle. His argument is against those who, as incredulous Jews were especially apt to do, made light of preaching Christ only present in Spirit, not reigning in power, and of the comparative fewness of those who professed to believe. His refutation of their taunts, and proof of their extreme danger, are grounded on the Lord's dealing with the men of Noah's day, who similarly slighted the divine warning, while those only were saved who heeded it. How few the latter, how many the former!

It is true indeed that "it is a place which the souls of men never would have entered had not sin been introduced"; but what is this to the purpose? It applies on the side of good as of evil, of heaven as of hell; for sin, which forfeited living on the earth along with innocence, furnished occasion for that infinite grace which gives the believer eternal life and heavenly glory in and with the Son of God, the last Adam. And if the actual condition of the departed be as regards the body incomplete, even so it is not correct to speak of our being at home with the Lord as "a place of unfinished happiness." Doubtless the Lord Himself, the saints with Him, and those on earth are looking onward to the day of His and their manifested glory, when the world shall know that the Father sent the Son and loved us even as He loved Him; when He will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, in Him in whom also we have obtained inheritance, being

predestinated according to His purpose; when in virtue of the name of Jesus every knee shall bow of beings heavenly, earthly, and infernal, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to God the Father's glory.

Nowhere does scripture speak of "the deliverance of the saints from" this state of things, though surely it is of the Lord's grace and the divine virtue of life in Him, that He will raise their bodies and transform what was erst of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory, according to the working of power whereby He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. *This* no doubt is the full answer to the cry of the wretched though quickened man (in Rom. vii.): "Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" For it is our resurrection (Rom. viii. 11) which will manifest the victory over death* through our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is His resurrection which has even now given us life in the Spirit, freeing us from the law of sin and death. We have for our souls what we shall know at His coming for our mortal bodies. But deliverance from a place of seclusion for our spirits, to be effected by our Lord's power, is a dream wholly opposed to the scriptural representation of the saints' enjoyment with Christ meanwhile. The apostle declares that to depart and be with Him even now

* In 1 Corinthians xv. 55 it is twice, "O death," *θάνατε*, & B D E F G I, some cursives, the more ancient versions save the Syriac and Gothic, several Greek, and all, or almost all, the Latin fathers. Two uncials of the ninth century (K L) with the bulk of cursives support the reading of *ᾧδε*. The Alex. before being changed gave *πρὸ σου νίκος*,

and thus is very much better than remaining here, though doubtless there will be more for the body when He comes: for the soul there cannot be. Therefore, while earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, he says that we are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord (that is, rather than abide here in the body absent from the Lord). Yet are we now, not shut up as were believers before redemption, but called to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ made us free.

Hence it is in vain to urge what "the old Latin language" describes, since it is quite opposed to the truth; and it is a mistake to cite the poetical parts of scripture which treat of the deliverance of God's people on earth. For "the gates of brass" and "the bars of iron" (Isaiah xlv. 2) certainly refer to Babylon, not to the presence of the Lord, with whom are the spirits of departed saints. So Psalm cxxi. 5, "Jehovah is thy shade upon thy right hand," is expressly a prophetic song for Israel in the latter day, and in no way about those deceased; as Isaiah xlix. 2 certainly has no such reference, the context plainly giving the transition from Israel to Christ. It is a distressing misrepresentation then to call His presence a place of confinement, though not of punishment, which "may well be called a prison." Never does God's word so call it. The converted robber asked to be remembered when Christ comes in His kingdom (*i.e.* in the resurrection state and the day of glory for the

earth); and the Lord gives him, as a nearer comfort and intrinsically the deepest joy, the assurance of being *with Him* that very day in paradise. It is grievous dishonour to Him and ignorance of scripture to slight such grace, even to the length of saying that it "may well be called a prison." Certainly it will never be so called by one who appreciates either the blessedness of Christ's love or the honour the Father is now putting on the Son. The Father's house can only be called "a prison" by the darkest prejudice. It is where Christ is now, and where we shall be when Christ at His coming takes us to be with Him as the expression of His fullest love. The presence of the Lord on high is the very kernel of joy by grace, whether for the separate spirit after death or when we are all changed at His coming.

Feeling apparently that this is rather strong language (though many of the fathers knew no better, through their ignorance of eternal life in Christ and of redemption), Bishop Horsley qualifies his defence, and affirms that the original word in the text of the apostle imports not so much as this, but merely a place of safe keeping. Now what are the facts of the usage of *φυλακή*? Primarily it means the act of watching; hence (2) the persons that watch or guard (as in Latin and English); (3) the time; (4) the place, not only where those watching are posted, but (5) where others are kept as in ward or prison. Such (with the moral application of taking heed, and being on one's guard, from keeping in ward) are the chief

senses in which the word was employed by the Greeks. The New Testament has it once in the first sense (Luke ii. 8), once in the second (Acts xii. 10), five times in the third (Matt. xiv. 25; xxiv. 43; Mark vi. 48; Luke xii. 38 twice), and forty times in the fifth sense, including not only 1 Peter iii. 19 but Revelation xviii. 2, where it is in the Authorised Version translated "the *hold* of every foul spirit and a *cage* of every unclean and hateful bird," all evidently equivalent to the meaning of "prison," which is used even of Satan's place of temporary detention. Never elsewhere does the Holy Spirit use it in the more general signification of a mere "place of safe keeping." Is there any special reason in our text why it should here be so rendered? The assigned ground of custody being the former disobedience of the spirits thus restrained, there ought to be no hesitation in accepting the English Version as fully justified, and rejecting that suggested as both unexampled in New Testament usage and at issue with the context.

It is then going beyond scripture to affirm that "Christ went and preached to souls of men thus in prison or safe keeping"; and no proof is given that He went to the prison of those souls or to the place of their custody. It is quite sure that the apostle speaks only of the spirits in prison, disobedient once when the long-suffering of GOD waited in Noah's days, not of souls of men as a whole in the separate state. It is sure that Christ, in the power of the Spirit, went and preached to the former; but it is

nowhere written that He went to the prison or place of custody of any souls whatever, and preached there. The building and the groundwork of Bishop Horsley are alike unsubstantial; his handling of scripture is careless, and his reasoning unsound. Such passages as Isaiah xlii. 7 and xlix. 9 have only to be examined with ordinary attention in order to satisfy any candid mind that it is a question of the deliverance of captives in this world, be it literal or figurative, and in no way of men's souls after death.

If, as Bishop Browne holds, hades and paradise are two names applying to the same state, it would seem to follow that paradise must apply to the place of departed saints, and hades to their state as separate from the body. For 2 Corinthians xii. 2, 4 naturally connects paradise, not with heaven merely, but even with the third heaven, where the Lord is (cf. Luke xxiii. 43); and Revelation ii. 7 is decisive, that in this very paradise of GOD will the faithful have their future reward at Christ's coming, when risen from the dead or changed. It is an error, therefore, to think that "it was not heaven"; for the latter scripture certainly identifies the scene of the separate spirits of the saints with that of their future glorification.* They are with the Lord now as they will be

* One sees hence the rashness of Bishop Horsley, who says, "Paradise was certainly some place where our Lord was to be on the very day on which He suffered, and where the companion of His sufferings was to be with Him. It was not heaven; for to heaven our Lord, after His death, ascended not till after His resurrection, as appears from His own words to Mary Magdalene. He was not,

when changed, and thus completely and for ever with Him; but now as then in heaven. The ancients who denied this were as wrong as the moderns, who popularly hold the soul's passing at once to its final reward with very little thought of the resurrection at Christ's second coming, or of the kingdom.

But we may here add that the ancient versions are too loose to render any help worth naming. Without discussing now whether the Peschito does (as Bode and others assert) or does not use *scheiul* for the grave as well as hades, it is plain that "lived" in spirit is faulty for ζωοποιηθεὶς, and that to leave out "in [or in the power of] which," substituting a mere connective particle "and," is far from the truth. "To the souls which were kept" may after a fashion represent τοῖς ἐν φ. πν., the addition of "in hades" or "scheiul" being unwarranted. There are other inaccuracies; but let this suffice. Far better here is the Philoxenian Syriac, which is thus rendered by

therefore, in heaven on the day of the crucifixion; and where *He* was not, the thief could not be with Him. It was no place of torment; for to any such place the name of paradise never was applied. It could be no other place than that region of repose and rest where the souls of the righteous abide in joyful hope of the consummation of their bliss." The fallacy running throughout is due to the want of understanding that the ascension is spoken not of the separate spirit but of the whole man, of body as well as spirit and soul. The conquerors are certainly not promised their final recompence in an intermediate state, yet it is to be in paradise. And there beyond controversy entered the spirit of the Lord Jesus, and with Him that of the converted robber on the day of crucifixion. John xx. 17 speaks of His ascension in bodily presence, but in no way negatives the going of His spirit there at death. (Compare Luke xxiii. 43 and Rev. ii. 7.)

White, "morte affectus quidem carne, vivificatus autem spiritu. In quo et spiritibus, qui in domo custodiae *sunt*, profectus praedicavit: Qui non obdixerant aliquando, quum expectabat longanimitas Dei in diebus Noe," etc. The Arabic (Pol.) and the Vulgate alone give correctly the beginning of the verse, the Erpenian Arabic and the Aethiopic being as loose as the Peschito Syr. The Aeth. adds "holy" to "Spirit"; but it does not follow, as Bishop Middleton seems to think, that the other ancient versions did not understand exactly the same sense, though they very properly did not add the word "holy" so as to define their rendering more than the original text. The Memphitic, according to Wilkins, is no better than the rest. This is his version: "mortuus quidem in carne, vivens autem in Spiritu. In hoc Spiritibus [S. sic] qui in carcere abiit evangelizavit. Incredulis aliquando," etc.

In every version and in every edition of the text, accurate or faulty, this at least stands out irrefragably, that the spirits in question are nowhere represented as those of men who had already repented when on earth, but on the contrary as disobedient. This we have seen to be very far from the only difficulty in the way of the alleged preaching in hades; but it is at least felt and confessed by the stoutest champions of that interpretation. It is quite erroneous to assume that Peter speaks here of the proclamation made of finishing the great work of salvation; nor is it less to say that it was addressed to the peni-

tents of antediluvian times, even if there were no question about the penitents of later ages, who are equally interested in the tidings. The apostle uses not even *εὐαγγελίζομαι* (which, though expressive of glad tidings, admits of far greater latitude in scripture than the good news of the finished work of salvation) but *κηρύσσω*, a word equally applicable to express a public setting forth of righteousness, and a warning of the destruction which must fall on the despiser. (Compare 2 Peter ii. 5, "Noah a preacher of righteousness," *δικαιοσύνης κήρυκα*.) The main difficulty then really is that the text speaks only of impenitent persons; the exposition, only of penitents.

Whatever the rapture with which we may suppose paradise filled when the soul of Jesus came among the souls of His redeemed, it is certain that the passage of the apostle says not one word about it; and it would be no small difficulty to produce any other scripture which does reveal it. Here it is a question of the spirits in custody for their former disobedience in the days of Noah, while a very few in contrast with them were saved, used for the present comfort of saints taunted with their paucity by the masses, who disbelieved what was preached by the Spirit now, as before the flood. Possibly no doubt some who then perished in the waters may not be doomed to perish everlastingly in the lake of fire, just as one at least preserved in the ark may not have been ordained to life eternal. But all this is only profitless speculation; and those who indulge in it lose sight of

the grand and plain lessons of the apostle, whether for the comfort of the faithful or for the warning of unbelievers. Before the kingdom of GOD is established and displayed in power the masses have ever been disobedient to the word, and believers a little flock; but be these ever so few, let not those forget the days wherein a world of impious men perished. And this too is not the worst; for their spirits are in ward (which is never said of the righteous), the Lord without doubt reserving them as unjust for judgment-day to be punished.

As much misconception exists respecting Calvin's sentiments, I will here state fully what he has written in his early and later works. It is at any rate an error to classify him, as did Dean Alford after Huther, with those who understand the passage of a literal descent of our Lord into hades. Nowhere does Calvin commit himself to any such statement, though, as already pointed out, he applied the phrase in the creed to His sufferings on the cross, and he conceived the efficacy of that work sensibly and at once to reach the Old Testament saints. The reader need not for a moment suppose authority is attached to what may be quoted from the great leader of the reformed. The effect, I trust, will be only to prove the incontestable superiority of the divine word; the wise are but weak where they depart from it, while it gives light to the simple.

In order of time the first allusion is in the *Psychopannychia*, published in 1534, when the author was

but twenty-five years of age: a tract directed against the materialistic notion of Anabaptists and others, who would have the soul to sleep during its departure from the body before the resurrection. Some zealots were the more disposed to embrace this revolting and utterly unscriptural scheme; because, if true, it would decide against the Popish dreams of limbus patrum, and in particular of purgatory. But Calvin's pious sobriety was proof against such a temptation even in the heats of controversy. This is his use of the text, as quoted from the third volume of his Tracts (Translation Soc. Edinb. 1851), pp. 428, 429:—

“Not less evidently does the apostle Peter show that after death the soul both exists and lives, when he says (1 Peter iii. 19) that Christ preached to the spirits in prison, not merely forgiveness or salvation to the spirits of the righteous, but also confusion to the spirits of the wicked. For so I interpret the passage which has puzzled many minds; and I am confident that, under favourable auspices, I will make good my interpretation. For after he had spoken of the humiliation of the cross of Christ, and shown that all the righteous must be conformed to His image, he immediately thereafter, to prevent them from falling into despair, makes mention of the resurrection to teach them how their tribulations were to end. For he states that Christ did not fall under death, but subduing it came forth victorious. He indeed says in words, that He was ‘put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit’ (1 Peter iii. 18), but just in

the same sense in which Paul says that He suffered in the humiliation of the flesh, but was raised by the power of the Spirit. Now, in order that believers might understand that the power belongs to them also, he subjoins that Christ exerted this power in regard to others, and not only towards the living but also towards the dead; and, moreover, not only towards His servants but also towards unbelievers and the despisers of His grace.

“Let us understand, moreover, that the sentence is defective and wants one of its two members(!). Many examples of this occur in scripture, especially when as here several sentiments are comprehended in one clause. And let no one wonder that the holy patriarchs who waited for the redemption of Christ are shut up in prison(!). As they saw the light at a distance, under a cloud and shade (as those who saw the feeble light of dawn or twilight), and had not yet an exhibition of the divine blessing in which they rested, he gave the name of prison to their expectancy.*

“The meaning of the apostle will therefore be that Christ in Spirit preached to those other spirits who were in prison—in other words, that the virtue of the redemption obtained by Christ appeared and was exhibited to the spirits of the dead. Now there is a

* But how could the spirits of the ungodly (as he supposes, no less than of the godly) be “in a watch-tower” of expectancy, anxiously looking out for Christ? if “in a prison,” how include the godly? It is painful to remark Calvin’s irreverence for scripture, no less than Luther’s, when they failed to understand its meaning.

want of the other member, which related to the pious who acknowledged and received this benefit(!); but it is complete in regard to unbelievers who received this announcement to their confusion. For when they saw but one redemption from which they were excluded, what could they do but despair? I hear our opponents muttering and saying that this is a gloss of my own invention, and that such authority does not bind them. I have no wish to bind them to my authority; I only (?) ask them whether or not the spirits shut up in prison are spirits."

In this handling of the text there is no great ability in tracing the apostle's scope or in developing the argument of the Epistle, though the reasoning may be fair against the fancied sleep of the soul. But it is plain that Calvin then held that the power of the work of Christ when accomplished reached the departed spirits, just and unjust, *not* that He visited them in person. But the young man does not tremble at GOD's word. He confesses that the sentence does not express what he wishes it to comprehend; for the member relative to the pious is wanting, unbelievers only being spoken of, at least "completely"! The truth is that the only patriarchs in question were those preserved in the ark; yet they are *contrasted* with the disobedient whose spirits were in prison. The pious Noah and his house therefore are not wanting afterwards, but so named then as to refute the argument before us.

Not long after Calvin published his *Institutes of Christian Religion*, in the second book of which

(chap. xvi. § 9) we may see, if possible more clearly, how little he agreed with the class to which of late he has been assigned. After a severe but just reproof of those who like Bishop Horsley in modern times wrest* Psalm cvii. 16 and Zechariah ix. 11 to an imaginary subterraneous limbus, treating such thoughts of Justin M., both the Cyrils, Ambrose, Jerome, etc., as no better than a fable, he then proceeds:—

“And what need was there that the soul of Christ should descend thither to set them free? I readily own indeed that Christ illumined them by the power of His spirit, enabling them to recognise that the grace, of which they had only had a foretaste, was then displayed to the world. And probably to this may be applied the passage of Peter, where he says that Christ went and preached to the spirits in a watch-tower (it is commonly rendered ‘in prison’) (1 Peter iii. 19). For the context (?) also leads us to the conclusion that the faithful who had died before that time were partakers of the same grace as ourselves; because he dwells on the power of Christ’s death in that He penetrated even to the dead, pious souls enjoying an immediate view of that visitation for which they had anxiously waited, whilst on the other hand the reprobate more clearly knew themselves shut out from all salvation. Though Peter does not speak very distinctly (!), it is not to be received that he absolutely confounds the righteous

* The Latin has “huc perperam trahunt testimonia,” etc. Still stronger is his French: “Pour colorer leur fantasie, ils tirent par les cheveux quelques témoignages,” etc.

and the wicked; he only intimates that both alike(?) had the death of Christ made known to them."

It is a strange notion, adopted by Calvin (it is to be hoped, without a single intelligent follower), that *φυλακή* here means a watch-tower, whence he supposed the saints to have been awaiting the Messiah. On this no remark is needed in addition to what has been made already, unless it be that the verse itself is as inexorably adverse to it as the general current of the New Testament. For the spirits spoken of are those of men not only without the least hint of any subsequent obedience, but expressly said to be kept in ward because of former disobedience. The only reason for charging defect or indefiniteness on the passage is his own singular fancy that the apostle meant to include the pious in these spirits without one word to justify it. As to the wicked the language of the apostle is confessed to be "complete."

The reverent reader of scripture will not fail to censure Calvin for adding to God's words, rather than Peter for taking away. In text or context there is no thought of making known Christ's death to believers and unbelievers; but very plainly does the apostle urge the danger of despising Christ's testimony by the Spirit, even before His Kingdom come, and this drawn from the days of Noah, to which the Lord elsewhere compares the day when the Son of man shall be revealed (Luke xvii.). Before the flood, as now, we see a time of testimony; but an awful blow fell on heedless man then, as there will again shortly

from Him who is *ready* to judge quick and dead. If there is any reference in the context to the believers who died before Christ it is to those saved in the ark, a figure of the salvation set forth in baptism by virtue of Christ's resurrection. The spirits in prison were expressly those of the men who perished in the deluge for their unbelief.

But here again we see how far it was from Calvin's mind that our Lord, in His disembodied state, did actually go to the place of detention for the departed spirits, and there preach; still farther, that He thus preached salvation to those in that state who had refused to obey the Spirit's voice when the judgment of the flood was hanging over them. The plain words of scripture here, as elsewhere, give no countenance to such strange doctrine; nor is it true that there is any "dark enigma" in the judgment either of men before the flood or of those the apostle warns here. It is neglect or unbelief of scripture to say that these are cases where the final doom seems at all out of proportion (I will not dwell on the impropriety of saying with the late Dean Alford, "infinitely out of proportion") to the lapse which has incurred it. To speak or to think so is to dispute with GOD and to condemn His most solemn revelation.

If the antediluvians had a doom more awful than others before them, we have the divine assurance on the one hand of a special testimony to them, and on the other of their excessive corruption and violence. Most justly therefore did the Judge of all the earth

send the flood which took them all away, save the man of faith who, divinely warned of things not seen as yet and moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Granted that worse remains for all unbelievers than the flood; but not worse for antediluvians as such than for others, and for none so sad as for those who slight GOD's call to repent and believe since redemption, especially for such as bear, and bear falsely or with indifference, the name of the Lord. Who that beholds the Lamb of GOD who takes away the sin of the world can say that the doom of unbelievers is out of proportion to their guilt? He who can deliberately think so seems to me to have no real sense of man's evil or of GOD's infinite grace.

To allow that unbelievers, who perished at the flood or otherwise, are objects of a preaching of salvation in the disembodied state when Christ died or at other seasons is to cast off, not only the general testimony of Old Testament and New, but very specially that dark background of eternal judgment and destruction which the gospel affirms with a precision unknown to law. To found such a renewal of hope for deceased unbelievers on our text, and to hint at extending it indefinitely, seems to my mind presumption of the most perilous sort.

But there is a third passage from Calvin's writings of a later date, which may furnish further matter for reflection as well as comparison with scripture.

In his comment on the Epistle, published about the beginning of 1554, it will be observed for the third time that, far from admitting Christ's personal descent to hades, as meant by the text, he seeks to explode any such application. "It has been a threadbare and common opinion that Christ's descent into hell is here stated; but the words mean no such thing. For there is no mention made of the soul of Christ, but only that He went by the Spirit. But these are very different things, that Christ's soul went, and that Christ preached by the power of His Spirit. Expressly, therefore, does Peter name the Spirit to take away the notion of what may be called a real presence"* (Owen's Translation, 1855).

* "Trita et vulgaris opinio fuit, hic narrari Christi descensum ad inferos; sed verba aliud sonant. Neque enim animae Christi fit mentio; sed tantum quod spiritu venerit. Sunt autem haec longe diversa, animam Christi venisse, et Christum praedicasse spiritus sui potentia. Nominatim ergo *spiritum* exprimit Petrus, ut imaginationem tollat (ut vocant) praesentiae. Alii de apostolis exponunt, quod scilicet eorum ministerio mortuis apparuit, id est, infidelibus. Fateor quidem, Christum per apostolos spiritu suo venisse ad eos qui in carne detinebantur; sed haec expositio multis rationibus falsa coarguitur. Primum dicit Petrus, ad spiritus Christum venisse; quo nomine significat animas a corporibus separatas; vivos enim homines spiritus vocari nusquam receptum est. Deinde quod cap. 4, in eundem sensum repetet Petrus, allegoriam non admittit. Ergo de mortuis proprie verba intelligi oportet. Tertio hoc valde absurdum est, Petrum de apostolis agentem mox quasi sui oblitum transilire ad tempus Noe. Certe nimis intempestive hoc modo abrupta esset oratio: falsum ergo est illud commentum. Porro eorum delirium, qui putant incredulos Christi adventu post mortem suam a reatu liberatos esse, longa refutatione non indiget. Certe enim scripturae doctrina est nos salutem non consequi in Christo, nisi fide: ergo qui ad mortem usque obstinati fuerunt, his nulla spes relinquitur.

Again, Calvin sets himself against the view advocated chiefly by Socinian commentators, but also afterward by Grotius, Schöttgen, and others, who take the preaching as that of the apostles, and by τοῖς ἐν φ. πν. understand either the Jews under law or the Gentiles under Satan, or both together as bound with a common chain of sin, the allusion to Noah's

Probabilius aliquanto loquuntur, qui redemptionem a Christo partam profuisse dicunt mortuis, qui tempore Noe diu fuerant increduli: tamen resipuerant demum, paulo antequam diluvio mergerentur. Illos ergo intelligunt poenas contumaciae suae dedisse in carne, servatos tamen Christi beneficio, ne aeternum perirent. Sed haec parum firma est divinatio; deinde pugnat cum orationis contextu. Petrus enim uni duntaxat familiae Noe salutem attribuit: exitio autem addicit omnes, qui extra arcam fuerunt. Ego itaque non dubito quin generaliter dicat Petrus gratiae Christi manifestationem ad pios spiritus pervenisse, atque ita vitali spiritus efficacia esse perfusos. Quare timendum non est, ne ad nos usque emanet. Sed quaeri potest curnam piorum animas postquam e corporibus migrarunt, in carcere collocet. Mihi quidem φυλακή potius speculam significat, in qua aguntur vigiliae, vel ipsum excubandi actum. Nam saepe ita capitur apud Graecos, et sensus optime fluet, pias animas in spem salutis promissae fuisse intentas, quasi minus eam considerarent. Neque enim dubium est, quin ad hunc scopum sancti patres tam in vita quam post mortem suas cogitationes direxerint. Verum si cui placeat retinere carceris nomen, non male conveniet. Sicuti enim, dum vivebant, lex illis (teste Paulo, Gal. iii. 23) quaedam arctior fuit custodia in qua detinebantur: ita post mortem sollicito Christi desiderio constringi oportuit, quia nondum spiritus libertatis plene exhibitus erat. Ergo exspectationis anxietas illis fuit veluti carcer. Hactenus apostoli verba cum re ipsa et filo argumenti belle congrunt; sed quod sequitur, nonnihil habet difficultatis. Neque enim hic fidelis sed incredulos solos commemorat, quo videtur tota illa superior expositio everti. Hac ratione adducti quidam putarunt nihil hic dici aliud nisi incredulos, qui olim piis molesti infestique fuerant, spiritum Christi indicem expertos esse, quasi hoc argumento consoletur fideles, quia Christus etiam mortuus poenas de ipsis sumpserit. Sed eorum errorem convincet, quod proximo capite

time being no more than a sample or similitude. To this our commentator replies: "I allow, indeed, that Christ through the apostles went by His Spirit to those who were detained in the flesh; but this explanation is proved false by many considerations. First, Peter says that Christ went to 'spirits,' by which he means souls separated from their bodies, for living men are nowhere called spirits. Secondly,

videbimus, mortuis evangelium praedicatum, ut vivant secundum Deum spiritu, quod peculiariter in fideles competit. Porro certum est idem, quod nunc dicit, illic repetere. Deinde non animadvertunt hoc praecipue velle Petrum, quemadmodum potentia spiritus Christi vivificam se in ipso ostendit, et talis, a mortuis fuit cognita, talem etiam erga nos fore. Videndum tamen quorsum hoc spectet, quod incredulos tantum nominat. Videtur enim dicere, Christum in spiritu apparuisse iis qui olim fuerant increduli. Atqui ego aliter distinguo; tunc quoque permistos fuisse incredulis puros Dei cultores, imo eorum multitudine fere opertos. Discrepat (fateor) ab hoc sensu Graeca syntaxis; debuerat enim Petrus, si hoc vellet, genitivum absolutum ponere. Sed quia apostolis novum non est liberius casum unum ponere alterius loco, et videmus Petrum hic confuse multas res simul coacervare, nec vero aliter aptus sensus elici poterat: non dubitavi ita resolvere orationem implicitam, quo intelligerent lectores alios vocari incredulos quam quibus praedicatum fuisse evangelium dixit. Postquam ergo dixit Christum se mortuis manifestasse, mox addit: *quum increduli fuissent olim*; quo significat nihil nocuisse sanctis patribus, quod impiorum multitudine paene obruti fuerint" (Calv. Comment. in loc. ed. Tholuck, 56, 57). The late Dean A., quoting the most objectionable part of these remarks, designates it "a sentence to be well remembered for many reasons": why, it is hard to see, unless it be a pleasure to remember how far a believer can go in unbelief, and a commentator in doing violence to his text. We may do well to remember it for our own warning, as well as to guard souls from this or any such licence. Is it possible that he meant to encourage others to similar disrespect towards an inspired writer from a reformer's delinquency? From his own freedom sometimes I cannot but fear that the latter may have been one of his "many reasons," which he naturally hid.

what Peter repeats in chapter iv. does not admit of allegory. Therefore the words must be understood properly of the dead. Thirdly, it seems most absurd that Peter, speaking of the apostles, as though forgetting himself, should go off to the time of Noah. Certainly such a mode of discourse would be abrupt and unsuitable. This explanation then cannot stand."

But there is no sparing the notion of many fathers, now it would seem reviving, that dead unbelievers had a fresh offer of salvation, and in fact were saved after the cross. "Moreover, their madness who think that unbelievers in the coming of Christ were after His death freed from their guilt needs no longer refutation; for it is the certain doctrine of scripture that we do not obtain salvation in Christ save by faith; and therefore for those who have been persistent in unbelief up to death there is no hope left."

Then he gives his reason for rejecting the notion that prevailed among the Greek and Latin Fathers:—"Somewhat more probable is their assertion who say that the redemption procured by Christ availed the dead who in Noah's day had long been unbelievers, but repented a short time before they were drowned in the deluge. The idea, therefore, is that they suffered in the flesh the punishment due to their perverseness, yet that they were saved by Christ's grace from perishing for ever. But this conjecture is weak; as besides it is inconsistent with the context, for Peter ascribes salvation only to the family of Noah, and assigns to ruin all who were outside the ark."

But we must pay more heed to his own conclusion in its most mature form. "I therefore do not doubt but Peter says generally that a manifestation of Christ's grace was made to the godly spirits, and that they were thus endued with the vital power of the Spirit. Wherefore there is no cause to fear that it will not reach to us. But it may be inquired why he puts in prison the souls of the godly after quitting their bodies. To my mind indeed *φυλακή* means rather a watch-tower in which a watch is kept, or the very act of watching. For it is often so taken among the Greeks, and the sense would be excellent that godly souls were intent on the hope of the promised salvation as if they saw it afar off. Nor is it doubtful that the holy fathers in life as well as after death directed their thoughts to this object. But if anyone chooses to retain the word (prison), it will not be unsuitable; for as, while they lived, the law (according to Paul, Gal. iii. 23) was a sort of strict custody in which they were kept, so after death they must have felt the anxious longing for Christ, because the spirit of liberty had not yet been fully given. Therefore their anxious expectation was a kind of prison."

Here for the third and last time in his writings we see how Calvin repudiates the idea of Christ's actual descent into hades. He among the reformed held a view substantially similar to that of Durand among Romanists, that Christ's preaching to the spirits was a visitation by the efficacy of His work, not by His presence among them. To call Abraham's bosom or

paradise either a watch-tower or a prison will not be accepted by sober believers as fair dealing with our Lord's intimations. To be "comforted" is no characteristic of imprisonment. Dean Alford's note on Luke xxiii. is not only exceptionable throughout, but its conclusion is refuted by 2 Corinthians xii. and especially by Revelation ii. 7, where beyond controversy paradise is the scene not merely of blessed spirits, but of the perfection of glorified humanity in heaven. The effort of Calvin to reconcile the idea of a prison with spirits in heaven (as he at least believed) is vain; and the weakening, if not change, of the apostle's words is the evident and inevitable consequence.

It is not correct therefore to say that thus far the apostle's words seem to agree well with the fact itself and with the thread of the argument. "But what follows," even he confesses, "is attended with some difficulty; for he does not mention the faithful here but only the unbelieving, by which the whole of the preceding exposition seems to be overturned."

I do not agree with the objection put forward any more than the thoughts we have next, believing indeed that the ground is of the strongest, and that the reasoning given has no real force. "Some have been led by this reason to think that nothing else is said here than that the unbelievers who had formerly opposed and persecuted the godly found the Spirit of Christ a judge, as if Peter consoles the faithful with this argument that Christ even when dead punished them. But their error is disposed of by what we

shall see in the next chapter, that the gospel was preached to the dead, that they might live according to God in the Spirit, which peculiarly applies to the faithful. Moreover, it is certain that he repeats there what he now says." "Next, they do not perceive that Peter meant this especially that as the power of the Spirit of Christ showed itself vivifying in Him, and was known as such by the dead, so it will be toward us."

The apostle seems rather to correct unbelieving notions natural to those who looked only for the Messiah reigning gloriously and delivering them from their enemies. They therefore despised the Spirit's action in preaching, and the comparatively small results which yet appear, nay the present sufferings and persecution of Christians. Peter brings in Christ's death but also His resurrection, and points to His dealing of old by the Spirit (not by a personal display in glory), where there was disobedience then as now, but to their spirits too as in prison kept for judgment, besides the public fact in this world that far fewer than the Christians were saved in the ark.

Further, it is gratuitous assumption to bring in here 1 Peter iv. 6, which has assuredly a quite distinct bearing. Calvin's mistake is proved by 2 Peter ii. 6, which does expressly treat of the same time, and excludes all idea of the faithful by the declaration that God brought a flood on a world of ungodly persons. I believe accordingly that the apostle does certainly *not* repeat there what he now says, but speaks here of good news having been set before dead

persons also, though of course the preaching to them was while they lived, with one or other of these two results, "in order that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, and live according to God in the Spirit." For the Jews habitually were apt to lose sight of the judgment of the dead in their eagerness to put forward the judgment of the quick, as to which the heathen were wholly ignorant.

"Let us see, however" (continues he), "why he mentions only unbelievers; for he seems (!) to say that Christ in Spirit appeared to those who were formerly disobedient. But I distinguish otherwise; that then also the pure servants of GOD were mixed up with unbelievers and were almost hidden by their multitude (!). Greek syntax (I confess) is at variance with this meaning (!); for Peter, if he meant this, ought to have used the genitive absolute (!!). But because it was no new thing for the apostles to put one case instead of another (!), and we see Peter here heaping together many things confusedly (!) and no other suitable sense can be elicited (!), I have no hesitation in thus explaining an intricate passage; so that readers may understand that those called disobedient are different from those to whom the preaching was made (!). After then he said that Christ manifested Himself to the dead, he immediately adds, 'when there were formerly disobedient men'; by which he means that the holy fathers sustained no harm from being almost overwhelmed by the multitude of the ungodly." How sad this perversion of the text!

To the rest of his remarks I make no objection, as they seem sound and sensible: but it would not be easy to discover a match for the hardihood of the words just cited, and the utter want of self-distrust in thinking and speaking as he does of an inspired man. The Greek construction, he admits, is adverse to the sense he would impose. This is enough for one who believes that the Holy Spirit perfectly guided Peter. Certainly the dative ἀπειθήσασιν is in agreement with the πνεύμασιν just before, which demolishes the imaginary distinction of GOD's servants mixed up with the unbelieving. It is impossible to construe or even conceive the meaning Calvin would insist on, without giving up the claim of the Epistle to be divinely inspired. Again, it is as false that the apostles elsewhere put one case instead of another as that Peter here heaps anything confusedly together. The most suitable sense has been shown to be the strictest according to grammatical considerations. Calvin therefore would have been much wiser if he had hesitated about his own explanation, which in fact brings intricacy into a passage by no means obscure, either in syntax or in scope.

The Christian reader will want no further reasoning to assure him that the spirits in prison are no other than those of men once disobedient, when the Spirit of Christ in Noah preached by him before the deluge. It is egregious to suppose that the Spirit *was* not only to strive with them, contrary to God's express admonition, after the term of a hundred and twenty years of

waiting in divine long-suffering, but even to save some or all after Christ died: a strange proof, it must be allowed, that the Lord knows how to deliver godly persons out of temptation and to reserve unjust men unto judgment-day to be punished.

Having examined the statements of the Reformer most celebrated for his doctrine, we may now turn to the very different views of Bellarmine, the most famous of those who have written on the Romanist side, with the authoritative statements of the Council of Trent in their Decrees and Canons, and yet more fully in their Catechism. To the discussion of our text the Cardinal devotes the entire chapter (xiii., book iv.) of his third general controversy—that about Christ (*Disput. R. Bellarmini Pol.* tom. i. pp. 176–178, Col. Agr. 1615). It may strike some as remarkable that the text is not cited by him to prove purgatory, but only the descent of Christ's soul to hell; and the more so as the proofs of purgatory from the New Testament are lamentably defective and manifestly forced. But this able controversialist justly avoided the passage as evidence for purgatory; for nothing would suit Romish ideas less than preaching, least of all Christ's preaching, to souls there. Wholly different is their scheme, which distinguishes purgatory from limbus patrum.*

* "IV. Verum inferorum nomen abdita illa receptacula significat, in quibus animae detinentur, quae coelestem beatitudinem non sunt consecutae. Ita vero sacrae litterae hanc vocem multis in locis usurparunt, etc. . . . Neque tamen ea receptacula unius et ejusdem generis sunt omnia; est enim teterrimus et obscurissimus carcer, ubi

Purgatory, according to Tridentine doctrine, is a penal fire to satisfy for the remains of sin in the righteous, a place of punishment where justified souls in general suffer for a time before they go to heaven; for, as they teach, souls dying in mortal sin go to hell, while on the other hand martyrs and adults dying immediately after baptism go to heaven. Thus, in the first part, Art. v. § iv.-vi. of the Catechism, they distinguish hell into (1) the place where the damned are for ever punished, (2) the fire of purgatory, where the souls of the pious suffer torture in expiation for a definite time, and (3) the receptacle in which the souls of

perpetuo et inextinguibili igne damnatorum animae simul cum im-mundis spiritibus torquentur, qui etiam gehenna, et propria significatione infernus vocatur. V. Praeterea est purgatorius ignis, quo piorum animae ad definitum tempus cruciatae expiantur ut eis in aeternam patriam ingressus patere possit, in quam nihil coinquatum ingreditur. . . . VI. Tertium postremo receptaculi genus est, in quo animae sanctorum ante Christi Domini adventum excipiebantur, ibique sine ullo doloris sensu, beata redemptionis spe sustentati, quieta habitatione fruebantur. Horum igitur piorum animas, quae in sinu Abrahae Salvatorem expectabant, Christus Dominus ad infernos descendens liberavit. VII. Nec vero existimandum est eum sic ad inferos descendisse, ut ejus tantummodo vis ac virtus, non etiam anima eo pervenerit. . . . VIII. . . . Praeterea alii omnes qui descenderunt, partim poenis acerbissimis torquebantur, partim vero ut alio doloris sensu carebant, tamen Dei aspectu privati et spe beatae gloriae quam expectabant, suspensi torquebantur. . . . IX. His expositis docendum erit propterea Christum Dominum ad inferos descendisse, ut ereptis daemonum spoliis, sanctos illos patres caeterosque pios carcere liberatos secum adduceret in coelum. . . . X. . . . Quamobrem antequam ille moreretur ne resurgeret, coeli portae nemini unquam patuerunt; sed piorum animae, cum e vivis excessissent, vel in sinum Abrahae deferebantur, vel, quod etiam nunc iis contingit, quibus aliquid diluendum et persolvendum est, purgatorii igne expiebantur.”—*Cat. Conc. Trid. Parisiis*, pp. 66-69.

saints before Christ's advent were received, and, exempt from any pain and sustained by the blessed hope of redemption, dwelt there in peace. It is true that this last statement does not cohere with the language of § 8, that the fathers were tortured in suspense while waiting for glory: but when was error really consistent? Again, in § 10 they confess that Old Testament saints, like those of the New, not only were in limbus as we have seen, that is, in the bosom of Abraham, but also might need the satisfaction of the fire of purgatory for their venial sins, and for whatever remained of the temporal punishment due for mortal sins though forgiven.

It is plain therefore that it is ignorance of their own doctrine or deceit for a Romanist to cite our text for purgatory.* Their most authoritative teaching is that the apostle speaks of the place once occupied by the Old Testament saints before Christ came and took them to heaven. Limbus patrum is therefore without a tenant, and useless for any practical purpose now. Purgatory is far otherwise, according to their best instructed doctors; though why it should be styled "purgatory" does not clearly or satisfactorily appear, for there is only the endurance of penalty, and no real purging whatever. How opposed to the truth and grace of GOD! By Christ all that believe are justified from all things and have life, eternal life, in Him. They even died with Christ from sin;

* So the note to the text in the Rhemish New Testament, where the difference is slurred over under the phrase "middle place."

crucified with Him, yet they live of a new life, not the first Adam life but Christ living in them, dead to sin but alive to GOD in Christ Jesus. Hence sin is not to reign in their mortal body. They are under not law but grace; and, living in the Spirit, they have to walk in the Spirit. But if one sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; and the washing of water by the word is made good to us by the Spirit in answer to Christ's intercession when we get defiled in any way.

But Romanism ignores and destroys the entire groundwork of the gospel and its privileges as applied now to the believer. They preach as if Christ were such an one as themselves; they reason as if His blood had no more efficacy than a bull's or a goat's; their thoughts of sin are as human as of the Saviour and of His work. Of a real communication of life through faith, of a new and spiritual nature which the believer has in receiving Christ, they have no notion; for if they saw either life or redemption as scripture puts them, there could be no place for purgatory. There is a process of cleansing which goes on in the believer while he passes through this defiling world, that the practical state may correspond with the standing, with life in Christ and full remission of sins by His blood. But when the Christian departs from this life, he departs to be with Christ; and there is no need of cleansing more, as only the new and holy life remains.

Romanism sets up the veil of Judaism again,

undoing laboriously the infinite blessing of a known reconciliation with GOD founded on atonement, and consequently putting those who bear the Lord's name not only outside, but in darkness, doubt, and uncertainty. It is the unbelief of nature, usurping the place of the gospel, a mere round of rites which flatter the flesh and can never clear the conscience. Who can wonder, seeing that the true light which now shines is intercepted, and the power of redemption is wholly denied? Hence it is really heathenism clothed with Jewish forms, a return of the Gentiles in Christendom to the weak and beggarly elements to which they desire to be again anew in bondage. It is the more guilty, because it is a going back to old darkness after GOD's revelation of Himself as a Saviour in Christ: a churlish turning away from the feast of divine love and light where the Father imparts His joy in goodness, saving the worst and to the uttermost, let who will stay without and boast of their own ways to His dishonour.

But enough of the fabulous purgatory: our business is with B.'s explanation of our text. The first exposition noticed is that of Augustine, who applied it to the preaching of Noah by the Spirit of Christ to the men of that day. The chief defect in it is that the prison is held to be the mortal body, instead of seeing that *ἐν φ.* ("in prison") refers to their subsequent state when alone also they could be properly designated as *πνεύμασιν* or "spirits."

The Cardinal apologises for refuting S. Augustine.

No doubt it is awkward to such as start with the Vincentian canon of tradition, "quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus"; and the rather when the father to be refuted is the greatest light of the Western Church. It is pleaded, however, that A. himself confesses that he had not understood the passage, and asks for cause to be shown why it should refer to hell (or hades). As if the father then not only permitted but himself desired it, B. proceeds to his task.*

His first argument is the common opinion of the fathers in opposition; Clement Alex., Athan., Epiphani., and Cyril, Hilary, Ambrose, Ruffin., and Oec. being all alluded to as inferring hence Christ's descent to the spirits in hell. He also points to the occurrence of an alleged citation of Isaiah to a similar effect in Justin M. and Irenaeus. But we may reserve the views of the early ecclesiastical writers to a later moment, when they will come fully before us.†

* "Prima expositio est sancti Augustini epist. 99 ad Euodium, quem sequitur Beda. Sic Augustinus exponit, ut per spiritus in carcere constitutos intelligebat homines qui erant tempore Noe, quorum animae erant in corpore mortali tamquam in carcere; est enim corpus carcer animae, ac dicit Christum non secundum humanitatem quam nondum assumpserat sed secundum Deitatem praedicasse per internam inspirationem, aut per linguam Noe illis hominibus, qui tamen increduli fuerunt. Itaque non vult August. hunc locum ad inferos pertinere. Hanc expositionem non refutarem si ipso Augustino placeret omnino; sed ipsemet fatetur se hunc locum non intellexisse et rogat ut quaeratur ratio quomodo possit hic locus ad inferos pertinere. Ipso igitur non solum permittente sed etiam cupiente Augustino, hanc expositionem primam breviter refellemus."

† "Primo, non placet haec sententia, quia communis Patrum est in contrarium. Nam Clemens Alexandrinus libro 6. Stromatum

The second objection is that Christ is said to have gone in spirit to preach to spirits. The spirit which is here distinguished against flesh seems as if it could not possibly mean anything else than the soul, says B. Not, therefore, in His divinity only, but in His soul did the Lord go and preach to the spirits. Now this, if it were the real intimation, would have incomparably greater weight for the Christian than the opinions of the Fathers, were they ever so unanimous. But it is precisely what I have shown the best authorities for the critically correct text of the epistle reject. If the article of the vulgarly received text before *πνεύματι* possessed any real weight of evidence, the phrase might well, if not certainly, convey the sense of Christ's spirit as man; but all the copies of value concur in the anarthrous form, *which cannot bear* the meaning for which B. contends. As the apostle wrote, it is the character of Christ's quickening when He rose from the dead. The Holy Spirit beyond a doubt

ante medium, Athanasius epistola ad Epictetum et lib. de incarnatione qui incipit: *Mos pii hominis*, Epiphanius haeresi 77, Cyrillus lib. de recta fide ad Theodosium, et lib. 12 in Johanem, ca. 36, Hilarius in Psal. 118 in illud: *Defecerunt oculi mei in eloquium tuum, dicentes: Quando consolaberis me?* Ambrosius in c. 10 ad Romanos, Ruffinus in expositione Symboli, Oecumenius in hunc locum Petri, exponunt de descensu Christi ad inferos, ubi spiritus defunctorum degere existimabant. Praeterea Justinus in dialogo cum Tryphone, et Irenaeus lib. 3, c. 23, citant verba quaedam Isaiae quae modo non inveniuntur, simillima istis verbis sancti Petri, ut credibile sit inde sanctum Petrum accepisse. Sunt autem haec verba: *Commemoratus est Dominus sanctus Israel mortuorum suorum, qui dormierant in terra sepultionis, et descendit ad eos evangelizare salutem quae est ab eo ut salvaret eos."*

was the agent; but this is presented in the shape of manner, and therefore the article is absent; whereas it must have been present if the intention had been to present the case as B. imagines. The more carefully the language is examined, the more certain it is that the soul of Christ cannot have been here contemplated.

Again, Augustine had good ground to say that $\xi\delta\epsilon\ \pi\nu$. could not apply to the soul of Christ; and B. tries in vain to answer by citing 1 Sam. xxvii. 9; 2 Sam. viii. 2; and Acts vii. 19; for this is a confusion of $\xi\omega\omega\gamma\omicron\nu\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ or $\xi\omega\gamma\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ with $\xi\omega\sigma\pi\omicron\iota\acute{\epsilon}\omega$. It is unfounded, therefore, to say that Peter meant that Christ's soul could not be slain, but remained alive in His triumphant work over hell. He really says and means that Christ was brought to life; and all efforts to shake the truth will only confirm it before all competent judges. Our clever theologian is decidedly feeble in questions of a philological kind.*

* "Secundo, non probatur ea sententia, quia dicitur Christus profectus spiritu ad praedicandum spiritus. Id enim refert illud, *in quo*, nimirum spiritu veniens, etc., at spiritus qui hic distinguitur contra carnem non videtur posse significare aliud quam animam: non ergo sola divinitate, sed etiam anima Dominus ad praedicandum spiritibus profectus est. S. Augustinus ex hac ipsa ratione dicit se moveri ad hoc ut non intelligat per hunc spiritum animam Christi. Nam cum dicitur (*vivificatus autem spiritu*) si spiritus significaret animam, sequeretur aliquando animam Christi mortuam fuisse, nihil enim vivificatur, nisi quod mortuum est. Vult igitur ipse sensum esse, Christum mortificatum fuisse carne, quia secundum carnem mortuus est, et vivificatum spiritu, quia virtute Spiritus Dei excitatus est a mortuis. Sed haec ratio non concludit: nam in Scriptura passim dicitur vivificari id quod non occiditur. 1 Reg. 27, *Virum et mulierem non vivificabat David*, id est non relinquebat vivum, et 2 Reg. 8 dicitur: *David extendisse duos funiculos super Moab, unum*

There is no force in the third argument, which is that the expression, "went and preached," can properly apply to the soul, not to Christ's divinity. It is a question of what is called in 1 Peter i. 11 "the Spirit of Christ," which certainly wrought in the prophets and among the rest in Noah, who is also formally styled "a preacher of righteousness" in the second Epistle. There is no more reason why in this place *πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν* should be a literal change of place in Christ personally than *ἐλθὼν εὐηγγελίσατο* in Ephesians ii. 17. We are dealing with historical matter equally in both passages; but figure is excluded in neither, and in fact there is the strongest analogy between the figures employed by both. The one illustrates the other. There is a manifestly distinct precision of phrase where a literal going of Christ is intended, as in verse 22, where we read *π. εἰς οὐρανόν*. It might have been safely inferred here if the apostle had written *π. εἰς ᾄδου*,* or *ᾄδην*.

It is granted that the fourth argument of the *ad occidendum, unum ad vivificandum*, id est definivisse quot ex Moabitibus vellet occidi, quot servari. Et Act. 7, *Afflixit patres nostros ut exponerent infantes suos ne vivificarentur*, id est, ut non viverent, sed occiderentur ad unum omnes. Vult ergo sanctus Petrus dicere, Christum carne mortificatum, spiritu vivificatum in passione, quia caro mortua mansit, anima vero non potuit occidi sed mansit viva et operans ac triumphans de inferno."

* "Tertio, non placet ea sententia, quia illud: *Veniens praedicavit*, si de anima intelligatur, proprie accipi poterit, vere enim venit ad locum ubi non erat. At si de divinitate, non potest accipi nisi improprie. Praeterea verbum in Graeco est *πορευθεὶς*, id est, *profectus*, quod idem reperitur paulo infra, cum dicitur, *profectus in coelum*, etc., at in hoc secundo loco accipitur proprie, ergo et in primo."

Cardinal lies fairly against a faulty detail in the view of Augustine; for we cannot by "spirits in prison" rightly understand living men. Such a description applies only to persons in their disembodied state. There is no ground, however, to suppose that the preaching was then and there, more than in chapter iv. 6 (where we are told that "to dead men also was the gospel preached"); but this, of course, while they were alive, not after they died as some strangely conceive, without the smallest warrant from the words employed, and contrary to the plain drift of universal scripture on the point elsewhere. It is not correct to suppose, as is often assumed, that Peter speaks here of the same persons as dead whom he had described in the chapter before as the "spirits in prison." He contemplates here not the generation which refused righteous warning before the flood, but such of the dead in times past as had the promises presented to them with the effect of putting all under the responsibility of being judged as men in flesh, while those who heeded the word, being by grace quickened, lived according to GOD in Spirit. The language of the apostle perfectly agrees with his own teaching throughout the Epistle, as well as his immediately precedent warning of the Lord's readiness to judge quick and dead; no less than the witness in baptism to His saving grace.

But the notion of preaching after death is evidently a strange doctrine, out of harmony with the context, and openly, irreconcilably, opposed to the scriptures in

general. There is therefore no need here to adopt the Augustinian fancy of "dead" meaning dead in trespasses and sins, any more than to explain "the spirits in prison" of souls shut up in flesh and the darkness of ignorance as if in a prison. But that the men were dead when the glad tidings were announced to them is not what the apostle says; still less that it was Christ who preached thus, or that dead men spoken of in such broad terms are the same as those formerly disobedient when the long-suffering of God was waiting in Noah's days. The exegesis which indulges in such assumptions as these seems justly open to the charge of having no longer any fixed rule. But, thanks be to God! scripture refuses everything of the sort, and cannot be broken.*

B.'s fifth objection is that, if the passage be understood of the preaching in the days of Noah, it does not appear to what end that account is inserted here. For how hang together, that Christ was put to death in

* "Quarto, quia per spiritus qui in carcere erant, non videtur posse intelligi homines viventes nisi de industria sanctus Petrus affectaverit improprietatem et obscuritatem: at certe quando habemus sensum proprium et facilem, non licet fingere tropos. Adde, quod capite quarto de iisdem loquens Petrus dicit: *ideo enim et mortuis praedicatum est evangelium*. Et licet Augustinus per mortuos intelligi velit mortuos in peccatis, qui tamen vivant in corporibus, tamen videtur obstare praecedens sententia, nam dicit: *Reddent rationem ei qui paratus est judicare vivos et mortuos, ideo enim et mortuis praedicatum est*. At cum dicimus Christum esse judicem vivorum et mortuorum, intelligimus ad literam, quod judicabit eos qui vivunt, et eos qui mortui sunt vere et proprie, et ut idem Augustinus docet in Enchiridio, ca. 55. Igitur veris mortuis Christus praedicavit, id est, ad veros inferos descendit."

flesh, but quickened (or, as he says, remained alive) in spirit, and therefore GOD formerly preached to men by Noah? But if we understand it of the descent to hell, all is consistent. For Peter, wishing to show that Christ in suffering and death remained alive, proves it as to His soul, because at that time His soul went to hell and preached to the spirits shut up in prison.* Now the fact on the contrary is that the reference to Noah's preaching is highly relevant to the purpose in hand. For the apostle is insisting on the certainty of divine government, whatever the long-suffering of GOD in bearing with men's hostility to His people and opposition to His testimony. His own people are called to walk with a good conscience in grace, suffering for righteousness, and for doing good, not ill. How touching the reason! Christ *once* suffered for sins: let this suffice. It was His grace so to suffer unto the full, exclusively His glory to suffer thus Just for unjust, in order that He might bring us to GOD. It is ours to suffer for good, for righteousness: never should it now be for faults and sins. For us when unjust this was His work, in which He was put to death in flesh but quickened in Spirit.

* "Quinto si hic locus intelligatur de praedicatione facta in diebus Noe, non apparet quorsum hic sit inserta ista narratio. Quomodo enim ista cohaerent, Christus in passione sua carne mortuus est, spiritu vivus mansit, ideo Deus olim praedicavit hominibus per Noe? At si intelligamus de descensu ad inferos, omnia cohaerent. Nam volens Petrus ostendere Christum in passione et morte mansisse vivum, quoad animam probat, quia illo tempore anima ejus profecta est in infernum, et praedicavit spiritibus in carcere conclusis."

The outer life of Jesus closed in suffering for our sins, the days of His flesh wherein He offered up both supplications and entreaties, with strong crying and tears, to Him who was able to save Him out of death. His resurrection was no question yet of external display of power, but characteristically of the Spirit, and hence unseen and unknown by the world. This was of all things most strange to the Jewish mind, which associated with the Messiah the manifestation of an energy overwhelming to all adversaries. Never was such a victory over Satan, even in his last stronghold of death, as Christ's resurrection; but He was made alive in no such way as instantly to put down the Roman oppressor, and expel the old serpent, and exalt restored Israel, and humble the haughty Gentiles, and deliver all creation. All this and much more must yet be to the praise of the glory of divine grace; but He was quickened in Spirit. Doubtless divine energy of the highest kind wrought here, but it was distinctively in the Spirit; and hence He who was thus raised (though most truly a risen man), capable of eating and drinking (though needing no food), capable of being handled and felt (though equally able to pass through closed doors, to appear in another form, to vanish out of sight, and to ascend to heaven), was seen only of chosen witnesses, not as by-and-by He will be seen by every eye.

In knowledge this ran so counter to ordinary Jewish expectation that the apostle reminds his readers of that which might help them to juster thoughts of

GOD's ways before the day comes when judgment will silence all gainsayers. It was no new thing for the Spirit of Christ to testify. He, as we have already been told—He who in the prophets had pointed out beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow, preached in Noah's days. The patience of GOD in testimony sounded strange to the Jew. Yet there it was in the first book of the law: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." It is the very scripture which it would appear the apostle had before his mind's eye, when inspired to write, "in which [Spirit] He went and preached to the spirits in prison, once disobedient when the long-suffering of GOD was waiting in Noah's days."

Now also, as then, it is a season of testimony and long-suffering before the judgment shall be executed at the appearing of Jesus. If the Spirit strove of old, surely it was not less now; if the work of GOD was wrought in the Spirit, proclaimed and received in the Spirit, not yet in visible and indisputable power before which all the world must bow, it was just so in the most marked season of testimony, before the most marked judgment on all mankind which the ancient oracles attest. Hence the exceeding appositeness of the allusion to Noah's days when the Spirit strove, but would not always; for the flood was then at hand which must, as it did, surprise and take away those who stumbled at the word, being disobedient. It was guilty then for the sons of Adam to slight the preaching: how much more so in the seed of Abraham now,

who had before them that ancient warning, with an incomparably fuller testimony in the promises fulfilled, though not yet manifested, before the world!

The attentive student of scripture may thus see the admirable force and pertinence of πνεύματι, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τ. ἐν φ. πν. πορ. ἐκήρ., especially as connected with the account given in Genesis vi., which the Holy Spirit here interweaves in the instruction for those addressed. There is no such statement as that Christ's Spirit was the subject, recipient, or vehicle of restored life, for this would require the article to convey such a sense. Yet were the article genuine and such a sense necessarily taught, it is hard to see how one who held to the text thence resulting could deny the monstrous inference that His spirit had previously died—at least, if the case connected had been the direct complement, not the indirect. It is also a manifest oversight to contend, as has been done, that the use of the word πνεύμασιν, connecting ἐν ᾧ (πνεύματι) our Lord's state with the state of those to whom He preached, is a crowning objection to the view here advocated. For it is certain that ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πν. describes the resurrection of Christ, not His separate state; and that the anarthrous form of πν. is decisive against the idea of its being His spirit as man, as is supposed in every form of the hypothesis that Christ descended to preach to separate spirits.

No such connection is in the passage: but attention is drawn to the character of Christ's resurrection as of the Spirit, bound up with His testimony and

presence now known in Christianity, instead of the visible power and glory of the kingdom which Israel looked for. The Spirit is expressed as giving character to the quickening, not *His* spirit as the subject or vehicle of restored life; and then it is added that in virtue, or in the power, of this (ἐν ᾧ) He went and preached to the spirits in prison, once on a time disobedient when the long-suffering of GOD was waiting in Noah's days, while an ark was in preparation. There was no external demonstration of divine power then, but a testimony of the Spirit, the Spirit of Christ; and all who despised it proved the value of the warning too late in their own destruction; and their spirits are imprisoned till the judgment of the dead declares afresh and for ever the consequences of despising GOD's word. So it will assuredly be with all who, preoccupied with Messianic glory according to Jewish feeling, scorn the Spirit of Christ that now warns the world of coming judgment, and mock a presence of Christ which is only known in Spirit.

Another point of analogy singled out from the tale of old and applied now is the fewness of those saved, as meeting the taunts of those who looked for universal homage to the Messiah reigning, and could not understand the hidden glory of One who, believed in by a few, bears with masses of unbelief till He comes in judgment.

But one can easily discern why all these analogies between the testimony of Noah and that under Christianity should escape the Cardinal, who finds

more congenial aliment in the reveries of imagination about the descent of Christ to hades, than in the solemn and sober realities of a Christian's walk and witness, well-nigh forgotten in Christendom. The dark source, whether Popish or Patristic, of Bishop Horsley's reasoning will not have escaped the reader. For he too, like Bellarmine, draws from this strikingly suggestive passage little more than the impotent conclusion that Christ remained alive in His passion and death! proved by His soul's descent and preaching to the spirits below. It is needless to expose the poverty of an interpretation which yields so paltry a result, as compared with the rich and varied lessons flowing from the passage, when understood in itself and in its connection with the Old Testament history alluded to.

Augustine had objected* to the deduction of

* "Sed objicit Augustinus, quia non videtur ratio, cur praedicaverit solum iis qui increduli fuerunt tempore Noe, cum tam multi alii essent in inferno. Item quia videtur absurdum valde, quod Christus praedicaverit in inferno. Videtur enim inde sequi, ut debeat etiam in inferno constitui ecclesia ubi convertantur et reconcilientur animae. Id autem absurdum sequi ex nostra sententia probat Augustinus, quia sinus Abrahae, ubi erant omnes justi, non videtur fuisse in inferno, sed ab inferno remotissimus cum esset Chaos magnum inter divitem inferni colonum et Lazarum habitorem sinus Abrahae. Ergo si hic locus de descensu ad inferos intelligitur, Christus solis peccatoribus praedicavit: at non praedicavit frustra, nec sine fructu: ergo aliquos convertit. At hoc nullo modo est asserendum, ergo praestat hunc locum non intelligere de descensu ad inferos. Et haec est potissima difficultas, quae Augustinum a communi sententia recedere coëgit. Timuit enim, ne cogeretur admittere conversionem et reconciliationem spirituum damnatorum.

"Respondeo, primam objectionem posse retorqueri. Nam etiam non apparet ratio cur dicat Petrus Christum in diebus Noe praedicasse potius quam in diebus Abraham et aliorum patriarchorum vel etiam

Christ's descent to hades, from this passage, (1) that consequently He would preach only to the unbelievers at the time of the flood, and (2) that, Abraham's bosom being distinct from hades, such a preaching would lead to the notion of converting the damned. Bellarmine (1) retorts with the question why Christ should be said to preach in Noah's days rather than in those of Abraham and other patriarchs or even of all other men, and (2) answers that the preaching of Christ in hell was not to convert infidels but only to announce great joy to pious souls in

aliorum omnium hominum. Dico praeterea, Christum praedicasse in inferno omnibus bonis spiritibus, sed nominatim fuisse expressos illos qui fuerunt in diebus Noe increduli, quia de illis erat majus dubium an essent salvi nec ne, cum puniti fuerint a Deo et submersi aquis diluvii. Indicat ergo hic Petrus etiam ex illis incredulis fuisse aliquos qui etiam in fine poenitentiam egerint, et licet quantum ad corpus perierint, tamen quantum ad animam salvi fuerint (quod etiam Hieronymus docet in quaestionibus Hebraicis in Genes. tractans illud cap. 6. *Non permanebit spiritus meus in homine, etc.*). Ubi dicit Deum punivisse multos eorum temporaliter aquis diluvii, ne deberet eos punire in gehenna in aeternum. Et hunc etiam sensum videntur facere illa verba cap. 4: *Ideo mortuis et praedicatum est evangelium, ut judicentur quidem secundum homines in carne, vivant autem secundum Deum spiritu*; id est, ut secundum homines exterius judicentur carne, id est, damnati existimentur humano iudicio, quia corpora eorum aquis necata fuerunt, tamen vivant spiritu secundum Deum, id est, animae eorum salvae sint apud Deum.

"Ad secundam dico, ipsum Augustinum postea cognovisse sinum Abrahae fuisse in inferno, ut patet ex tractatu in Psal. 85 et lib. 20 de civ. Dei, ca. 15, quae sententia est omnium patrum et totius ecclesiae. Dico igitur, praedicationem Christi in inferno non fuisse ad convertendos infideles, sed fuisse solum ad annunciationem gaudii magni piis animabus, quibus annuntiavit completam esse redemptionem, ut intelligerent se jam inde liberandas et tempore suo etiam corpora recepturas. Atque haec de expositione sancti Augustini quam refutavimus, sequuti mentem ejus, non verba."

redemption now completed, Abraham's bosom being viewed as part of hades by Augustine himself like all other fathers.

But the reader will have seen that Bellarmine is quite wrong, and Augustine much more right, as to both points. The text characterises the imprisoned spirits as having been formerly disobedient without a trace of their subsequent repentance or piety, the announcement of great joy being a pure fiction for which the passage gives no warrant, but rather as we read it plain intimations to the contrary. Not a word in scripture intimates that those on whom the flood came were believers but unbelievers, not a hint that they repented at last or that their souls were saved, though their bodies perished, let Jerome teach what he may. Their spirits are said to be in prison, in full contrast with Abraham's bosom or paradise; they are kept there for judgment like angels that sinned of old, with whom indeed the apostle classes them in the second chapter of his second Epistle; and no wonder, for he characterises them as a world of ungodly men.

Are these then the pious souls to whom above all others the Lord descended to announce the great joy of His completed redemption? It will be observed by those who weigh GOD'S word, apart from tradition, that not a thought appears in the passage of delivering the spirits from prison, any more than of translating them to heaven. This would be singular on the supposition of such a descent; for it is evident that, were the patristic idea true, it would be more in

keeping with Christ's presence there to speak, not of preaching in hades, but of translating the saints thence gloriously as the fruit of His victory over Satan.

The remarks of Bellarmine on Beza's modification of the Augustinian view and on Calvin's ideas do not claim any special notice here, whatever is true in them (as I believe) having been already anticipated.

We may now briefly consider the current of thought from days not long subsequent to those of the apostles. We shall see the various but constant aberration from the truth which characterised such as drew from our text an actual preaching of our Lord in the world of spirits. Doubtless it was no question of an isolated or casual misinterpretation of the scripture before us; but this rather sprang from the general ignorance even then pervading Christendom as to the full blessedness of our standing in Christ—ignorance found in the Fathers as such, if possible more than in the popular theology of our own day, or in the puritanism of the past. Lack of faith could not but expose men to crude guesses because of their uncertainty; especially as here where the first obvious view of the passage is not the sure, sound, and spiritual one which falls in with the contextual aim and the analogy of the faith elsewhere. Indeed our way of regarding any particular portion of revealed truth can scarcely be severed from our state generally; so much so that habitually an intelligent eye can see where we are by the judgment we form as to divine things wholly remote and apparently quite unconnected. Here, for instance, a

soul established in the gospel and therefore feeling solemnly the fixed doom of the lost, as well as the blessedness of the saved now and evermore, is at once delivered from nine-tenths of the speculations about our Lord's preaching to the spirits of saints or sinners after their and His separation from the body. It is ordinarily thus: where we rest not in the grace and truth which came by Jesus, we are in danger from ordinances, fables, reasonings, or from a mixture of them all. Apostolic power and fidelity, Paul's above all, cut up by the root these workings of Satan's malice; but, when the apostles were gone, the evils previously judged found too ready an acceptance and gave birth to results more openly disastrous both to truth and to souls, and, if this could be, more decidedly opposed to the glory of the Lord.

1. The first I would produce is the allusion of Justin M., the ecclesiastical writer, more blessed in his death of martyrdom than in his life of philosophy. It will illustrate the state of things at that time in more ways than one. *Καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἱερεμίου ὁμοίως ταῦτα περιέκοψαν. Ἐμνήσθη δὲ κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἀπὸ (? ἅγιος) Ἰσραὴλ τῶν νεκρῶν αὐτοῦ τῶν κεκοιμημένων εἰς γῆν χώματος, καὶ κατέβη πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀναγγελίσασθαι αὐτοῖς τὸ σωτήριον αὐτοῦ.* The common reading is retained in the modern edition of Otto, spite of the conjecture of Sylburg approved by Jebb, Thirlby, etc. But the emendation if correct makes no difference for our object. Here then we have a spurious text attributed to the prophet

Jeremiah, but evidently founded on the vulgar misapplication of 1 Peter iii. 19; iv. 6. Man, however, cannot add to scripture without clashing with revelation. Supposing we draw from the apostle a personal preaching of the Lord in the place of spirits, it is impossible to infer from the words of the New Testament an announcement of His salvation. The apostle, where he may be thought to speak of such a descent, tells us only of His preaching to imprisoned spirits once disobedient in the days of Noah; where he speaks of glad tidings to dead men, there is no hint of Christ's descent to preach.

2. Irenaeus, the pious Bishop of Lyons in the latter part of the second century, cites repeatedly this alleged text, under the name of Isaiah and of Jeremiah, as well as with no name attached to it (*Adv. Haer.* iii. c. 20, § 4; iv. c. 22, § 1). The notion that the Jews effaced such a verse from the Hebrew is baseless; especially as they have left other testimonies to Christ incomparably clearer and more at issue with their traditions. Even Massuet confesses this to be a knot quite beyond his power to untie, bound though he was to sustain, had it been possible, the credit of patristic traditions. "Vereor ut Justino primum, ac deinde Irenaeo fucum fecerit apocrypha quaequam scriptura." The unbiassed reader will have no scruple in affirming what the Benedictine feared—that it is a mere apocryphal gloss, loosely imputed to a prophet, and a little expanding as it goes down; for Irenaeus adds (or at least the barbarous Latin version, which

alone here represents his Greek) "ut salvaret eos" or "ad salvandum eos." That is, He preached in hades not merely to announce but to save. Irenaeus, strange to say, seems unusually attached to this pseudograph; for he cites it again in his book, iv. c. 33, § 1. Only in § 12 of the same chapter the Latin translation gives the notable variation, "in terri limi . . . uti erigeret," with the addition named in both, though differently expressed. Lastly, in his fifth book too he once more falls back on his prophet, but recurs to the earlier form, "in terra sepelitionis" (so Feuardentius, etc., instead of the Erasmian reading, "stipulationis"), though even so with some change, "extrahere eos et salvare eos." Comment is scarce needed. When a man quotes so carelessly in the same work of no considerable extent, we need not be surprised if he were loose as to scripture and indistinct as to doctrine.

3. But there is no small descent when we turn next to *Hermas*, an author probably of the latter half of the same second century. Much of his reputation was derived from the singular confusion which led many in early days to regard him as the Christian saluted in *Romans* xvi. 14; for most probably (*Muratori, Ant. Ital. med. aevi*, iii. 853) he was brother of the Pius who was Bishop of Rome after Hyginus died A.D. 157. Here too we have only a Latin version of the "Shepherd," as even the recent discoveries of Tischendorf do not give us the Greek original* beyond

* It is likely indeed, that Clement of Alexandria gives us part of the Greek in his citation in the *Strom.* ii. 379, ed. Sylb.

the fourth ἐντολὴ (*i.e.* mandatum or command) of the second book. I quote from the third book, and the sixteenth section of the ninth similitude (*Cotelerii Patres Apost.* I. 118, ed. 1698):—

“Quoniam hi Apostoli et doctores, qui praedicaverunt nomen Filii Dei, cum habentes fidem ejus et potestatem defuncti essent, praedicaverunt his qui ante obierunt, et ipsi dederunt eis illud signum. Descenderunt igitur in aquam cum illis, et iterum ascenderunt,” etc. Thus, Hermas is distinctly committed to the absurd doctrine that the apostles preached to the dead and baptised them. This is a further and a desperate step in superstition, and of course without a shred of support from scripture; but it seems to be the not unnatural complement of the notion that the Lord went down after death to preach in hades to the spirits there. Is it not melancholy to think that such a production as this, immeasurably inferior in every point of view to Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, though doubted by some and even declared apocryphal by certain synods, was extensively read in the public Christian assemblies, and was evidently incorporated with the scriptures in the Sinai MS., as Clement* of Rome’s epistles were in the Alexandrian copy?

4. Can we go down lower? Alas! not only so, but

* Clement of Rome is tainted with the same vice of that early day that we have seen in Justin and Irenaeus, quoting as scripture the words of men. Not only does he refer to apocryphal books, but also draws from the false Gospel to the Egyptians, not to speak of an unauthentic dialogue between the Lord and Peter; nay, he more than once formally cites as the word of God what is not scripture, γέγρα-

at the next step. Clement of Alexandria appears under the reign of Severus and Caracalla, a speculative eclectic though a Christian presbyter. In the second book of his *Miscellanies* (Στρώμ. 379, ed. Sylburg, 1629) he quotes "the Shepherd," and applies the baptism carried on by the apostles after death, not (as Hermas appears to mean) only to the godly before redemption, but to heathen philosophers or moral men as well. In the sixth book (637 *et seqq.*) he recurs to a similar strain, and yet more openly treats it as certain that our Lord descended to hades for no other reason than to preach the gospel, and this that they might believe and be saved; that such as lived uprightly, Jews or Greeks, even though imprisoned in hades, on hearing His voice either in person or through the apostles, were presently brought to conversion and faith; that there is the same dispensation below as on earth for souls to manifest their repentance or their unbelief. Thus the awful consequences of living and dying impenitent in this world are explained away by this Clementine notion of a further offer of salvation by Christ and the apostles after death; and this evidently to keep up the illusion of salvation for philosophers and moral men among the heathen.

5. None will wonder that the famous Origen outran

πται γάρ· κολλᾶσθε τοῖς ἁγίοις, ὅτι οἱ κολλώμενοι αὐτοῖς ἁγιασθήσονται (1 Ep. ad Cor. xlv.). and εἶπεν ὁ κύριος· ἐὰν ᾗτε μετ' ἐμοῦ συνηγμένοι ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ μου καὶ μὴ ποιήτε τὰς ἐντολάς μου, ἀποβαλῶ ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐρῶ ὑμῖν· ὑπάγετε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, οὐκ οἶδα ὑμᾶς πόθεν ἐστέ, ἐργάται ἀνομίας (2 Ep. iv.). Some doubt the genuineness of the second epistle; but the first substantiates what I say.

his master, and that the philosopher Celsus provoked him into deplorable statements. Thus in the second book in reply (Opera I. 419, ed. de la Rue) Origen does not hesitate to say that the Lord in the separate state held converse with souls similarly separate from the body, converting to Himself such of them as would or such as He saw more suited for reasons known to Him. Again, in his fourth homily on Luke (I. 937), he says that John B. descended to hell and there preached the Lord's advent; and a similar work of Paul he seems to imply in his comment on Romans xi. 13 (IV. 35).

6. Cyril of Alexandria writes, if possible, more unguardedly in his Homilies:—"hades spoiled of spirits"; yea, of Christ (Hom. 6) "immediately spoiling all hades, and opening the doors which admit of no escape to the spirits of those fallen asleep; and, the devil then deserted and alone, He rose after the third day."

7. In the same spirit wrote the author of a discourse on the ascension, falsely imputed to Chrysostom, who really censures such thoughts as old wives' fables in his Homily on Matthew xi. 3, as Augustine classed the dream among heresies—the 79th in his list. I say nothing of the question raised by Gregory of Nazianzus (whether Christ saves in hades all without exception or only such as believe, Orat. xli.); or of such romance-writers as Anastasius, who introduces Plato appearing to one asleep who used to abuse his doctrine, and pretending that he was one of the first to believe on Christ when He preached in hades. Even a Roman

Synod condemned one, a man of mark, who taught thus in the year 745. Tertullian among the early Latins and Gregory of Nyssa are far enough from Romish doctrine either as to limbus patrum or as to purgatory; for they, like many others of the ancients, held all the saints before and after Christ to be waiting in Abraham's bosom, a region not heavenly yet higher than hell or hades, till the resurrection at Christ's coming. Let this suffice just now.

I feel it neither needful nor profitable to pursue the long dreary journey through the mediæval desert, though even then souls were not wanting, like our own Bede and St. Thomas Aquinas, with a long interval between, who adhered to the substantial truth in the apostle's words as against the more prevalent superstition which had overgrown them.

Coming down to the Reformation times, it may be of interest to mention that Luther naturally did not refrain from giving his mind on a scripture which had occupied so many and been perverted by not a few. We may notice here that Dr. John Brown, in his *Expository Discourses* on 1 Peter (i. 222), cites with mild censure some alleged remarks of the leading Reformer,* as not meriting the eulogium he bestows on the "well-weighed words of the candid and learned Joachim Camerarius."† If Luther really wrote that

* "*Hac tam horribili poena Petrus Apostolus quoque motus videtur, ut non aliter quam fanaticus loquatur talia verba quae ne hodie quidem a nobis intelligi possunt (1 Peter iii. 19, 20). Mirabile profecto iudicium, et vox paene fanatica.*"—*Luth. Exeg. Opp. Lat.* tom. ii. p. 221.

† "*Est hic unus ex iis locis sacrarum literarum, de quibus pietas*

the apostle seems moved by the horrible punishment, so as to speak like a fanatic words which cannot to this day be understood by us, he spoke with as little sense as reverence. Even of a fellow-Christian, or of an ordinary minister of the gospel, ought one not to be thoroughly sure that he is in error before pronouncing that he talks like a fanatic or almost so? But to confess that the words were not understood ought, to say the least, to have shielded an apostle from any censure; indeed, to have made it impossible, and thrown the blame on those who confessedly understood not the voice of inspiration. But I have searched in vain both his Latin (tomm. i.-iv., Jenae, 1556-8 folio) and his German (ten vols. folio, Altenburg, 1561-4) writings without finding anything like the passage cited. What I do see in both Latin and German differs widely; so that, if the citation be authentic, it would go to prove very great inconsistency.

In the exposition of Peter's Epistles, given in the second volume of the great German collection, he calls the passage (1 Peter iii. 19-22) a "wonderful text," but speaks with considerable hesitation. He will not resist those who infer from it that the Lord descended to hades, and preached to the spirits imprisoned there; but he seems disposed to think the meaning is rather that Christ, risen and gone to heaven, preaches to sinners spiritually while His servants preach the word

religiosa quaerere amplius et dubitare quid dicatur sine reprehensione : et de quibus diversae etiam sententiae admitti posse videantur, dum modo non detorqueatur *κανὼν τοῦ τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν*, id est, religiosa de fide consensio, neque aberretur *ἀπὸ τῆς ἀναλογίας τῆς πίστεως*."

to their ears—to sinners as unbelieving as those in the days of Noah, and thus embracing sinners of all times. He objects, however, to the change of man's state before GOD after death. This is the substance of a rather diffuse comment in pages 451, 452.

The passage in the German writings, vol. viii. p. 660, answers to what appears in the Latin edition, vol. iv. pp. 638, 639: "Et Petrus hunc descensum videtur explicare cum dicit," etc. "Hic Petrus clare dicit, non solum apparuisse Christum defunctis Patribus et Patriarchis, quorum sine dubio Christus aliquos cum resurgeret secum ad vitam aeternam excitavit, sed etiam aliquibus qui tempore Noae non crediderunt ac expectaverunt patientiam Dei, hoc est, qui sperarunt Deum non sic duriter grassaturum in universam carnem, praedicasse, ut agnoscerent sibi per Christi sacrificium peccata condonata esse."

Hence it is evident that there is little harmony between the earlier and the later doctrine of Luther on this point; and that the later view does not seem to be an advance in truth, but rather approximates to what was taught afterwards by the well-known Romanist divines, Suarez, Estius, etc., as well as by his own followers. The earlier view is what we find substantially taken up afterwards by the Socinian party,*

* "Christus dum in terris vixit paucos Judaeos convertit: at post mortem et resurrectionem suam, per spiritum profectus praedicavit spiritibus qui erant in carcere (1 Peter iii. 19); id est gentibus quae sedebant in umbra mortis constrictae compedibus, atque catenis tenebrarum et ignorantiae, easque imperio ac regimini sui subjecit."
—*Wolzogenius, Comm. in Evang. Joan. xiv. 12. Bibl. Pol. Frat. viii. 963.*

or such as too often seem swayed by their reasoning, Grotius, Schöttgen, etc.

Francowitz (or Flacius Illyricus), famous for his hand in the *Centuriae Magdeburgenses* and other works which furthered the Reformation, held that our Lord descended to hades to announce only the condemnation of the lost. It is plain however that, though less objectionable on exegetic grounds than that which supposes a declaration of deliverance to believers there (for Peter speaks only of spirits in prison once disobedient), this scheme is open to the defect equally fatal to both views, that the passage in debate speaks neither of believers nor of unbelievers as a whole in the separate state, but only of such as rejected the divine testimony in Noah's days. Not that there is any force in Wiesinger's or Alford's reasoning that such a "*concio damnatoria*" would jar in the midst of a passage intended to convey consolation and encouragement by the blessed consequences of Christ's sufferings. For, as we have seen, the context here as elsewhere consists really of as distinct and solemn warning to unbelief as of rich and solid comfort to faith. On the face of it the governing object is to meet those who might be overmuch tried and cast down under their sufferings for righteousness' sake, and to sustain them in well-doing.

Hence the apostle brings in the Messiah not reigning here but suffering once for sins, Just for unjust, that He might bring us to GOD; put to death in respect of flesh and quickened in respect of Spirit. Instead

of even then restoring the kingdom to Israel, there was only the testimony of His Spirit while He is exalted (not on earth or in Jerusalem, but) on high at God's right hand, angels and authorities and powers being subjected to Him, but not yet His enemies made a footstool for His feet. On the contrary there goes on here below His testimony by the Spirit; just as of old He went in the Spirit and preached when the antediluvians disobeyed the word as the mass do now, and still fewer were those saved in the ark than the comparatively few baptised, who have now found that acceptance which is the demand of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is the long-suffering of God now as then, and the Lord will come to judge the quick as the deluge befell the despisers then, eternal judgment awaiting all the wicked dead by-and-by (Rev. xx. 11-15).

We have already seen Calvin was as little consistent as Luther. Thus in his Commentary on the first Epistle he maintains that Peter speaks of the manifestation of Christ's grace to godly spirits, and this expressly *in the spirit* that he might take away the notion of a real descent of Christ into hades to preach,* contrary to the representation of Dr. Huther followed by Alford, who twice over classes him with

* This reminds one of J. Pious Mirandula before the Reformation, as cited by Huther: "Christus non veraciter et quantum ad realem praesentiam descendit ad inferos . . . sed quo ad effectum." Hollaz sets against it the *τοπεία* of Christ (ver. 22); but this no more proves it to be really personal than Paul's *ἐλθὼν* in Eph. ii. 17, indeed rather less.

the advocates of a literal preaching there. On the other hand Calvin in his Institutions (like Erasmus a little before him, following Athanasius among the Greek fathers and Ambrose among the Latin) lays down that the preaching had for its objects both the good and the evil, the one for salvation and the other for damnation. But such an inference, while it may be reasoned out or imagined, none can gravely pretend to elicit from the words of the apostle as the revealed mind of the Spirit.

But early or late, in this at least Luther and Calvin agree with Augustine (who was no less wavering and uncertain as to our text than themselves), that preaching the gospel for faith and repentance to spirits after death comes altogether too late, and is repugnant to the uniform tenor of scripture in its plainest, brightest, and most earnest appeals to the souls of men. It is a notion subversive of the first principles of truth, not to say of morality. Let me add that a fresh offer of salvation in the invisible world is not more contradictory to and contradicted by the awful warnings to unbelievers which accompany the gospel than destructive of one of the main lessons in the passage before us. For Peter is refuting the fond security of such as taunt the paucity of the household of faith in comparison with the multitudes of those who slighted the Christians and the suffering Christ (their foundation before GOD): and this by the instance of the days of Noah, when the world perished save the few who found a divinely given and ordered shelter in the ark.

It would scarcely be for edification to pursue minutely the history of opinion to our own days, involving too as it would a frequent repetition of hardly anything more than old views and arguments under new names. Dr. J. Brown's exposition is perhaps the lengthiest contribution among moderns on the Epistle, and therefore it may seem to claim examination; but there is extremely little to notice in the way of fresh thought, and his own judgment of the passage seems to my mind defective or wrong in various ways.

Commenting on the Authorised Version he says (168, 169), "the words flesh and spirit are plainly opposed to one another. The prepositions *in* and *by* are not in the original. The opposed words [σὰρξ—πνεύματι] are in the same case; they stand plainly in the same relation respectively to the words rendered 'put to death' and 'quickened' [θανατωθεῖς, ζωοποιηθεῖς], and that relation should have been expressed in English by the same particle. If you give the rendering, 'put to death *in* the flesh,' you must give the corresponding rendering, 'quickened *in* the spirit,' which would bring out the sense, either 'quickened in His human spirit or soul,' a statement to which it is difficult to attach a distinct meaning; for the soul is not mortal. Christ's spirit did not die, and to continue alive is not the meaning of the original word; or 'quickened in His divine nature,' a statement obviously absurd and false, as implying that He who is the life, the living One, can be quickened, either in the sense of

restored from a state of death, or endowed with a larger measure of vitality. On the other hand, if you adopt the rendering of our translators in the second clause, 'quickened by the Spirit,' then you must render in accordance with it the first clause, 'put to death *by* the flesh.' If by the Spirit you understand the divine nature of our Lord, by the flesh you must understand the human nature, which makes the expression an absurdity. On the other hand, if you understand by the Spirit the Holy Ghost, then by flesh you must understand 'mankind,' put to death by men, but restored to life by GOD the Spirit. This interpretation, though giving a consistent and true sense, the sense so forcibly expressed in Peter's words to the Jews, 'whom *ye* crucified; whom *GOD* raised from the dead,' is forbidden by the usage of the language. Then there can be no doubt that there does appear something very material in introducing our Lord in what is plainly a result of His atoning sufferings, as having in the Spirit, by which He was quickened after He had been put to death, gone many centuries before, in the antediluvian age, to preach to an ungodly world; and there is just as little doubt that the only meaning that the words will bear, without violence being done them, is that it was when He had been put to death in the flesh, and quickened in the Spirit or by the Spirit, whatever that may mean, He went and preached; and that 'the spirits,' whoever they be, were 'in prison,' whatever that may mean, when He preached to them."

This is no unfair specimen of what one cannot but

characterise as daubing with untempered mortar. It is but a balancing of probabilities or rather of improbabilities, and recalls the passage of Isaiah, who tells us of the judicial sleep poured out on Israel; so that the whole vision became to them like the words of a sealed book. For this, if delivered to the learned man with the request to read it, elicits the reply, I cannot, for it is sealed; or, if delivered with the same request to the unlearned, he excuses himself as unable because of the want of learning.

It is confessed by Dr. J. B. that the sense brought out is self-consistent and not incompatible with any of the facts or doctrines of revelation. He only complains of the mode of interpretation as liable to objections. I shall show, however, that, far from being really insurmountable, every one of these objections is destitute of weight.

Flesh and spirit are opposed; though in the same case it does not follow that they must have the same preposition supplied in English. This would not be necessary if the same Greek preposition (which is far stronger or more precise) accompanied each of the two opposed terms. Thus in Romans iv. 25 two clauses stand in antithesis with one another, whence many have been allured to argue, like our author here, for a necessarily similar force of *διὰ* with each accusative. But this is an error. For the former clause means that our Lord Jesus was delivered because of our offences; the second, that He was raised again on account of the justifying of us (that is, in order to

it); for justifying cannot be severed from faith, as the very next verse proves (Rom. v. 1). Indeed the notion of justification before faith would introduce nothing but confusion and false doctrine, not to speak of the evil in practice which naturally results. The Authorised Version however has not rendered ill in giving "for" with both clauses, the English preposition "for" being as flexible as the corresponding Greek one.

Similarly here there is no necessity to vary the English by supplying *in* the flesh and *by* the Spirit; but, if there were, it was open to the translators to have done so. The relation of the dative is not so contracted or consequently so uniform as to demand the exactly same form of representing it. Besides we have to take into account the idiom of the English tongue, which does not by any means conform always to the Greek. The reader is already aware that "in" or "in respect of" may be given equally in both the clauses; but the translators might legitimately enough have given "in" and "by" as they have done. Hence the reasoning which develops the objection is invalid. "In His human spirit," if it were ever so proper in itself, would require the article $\tau\hat{\omega}$ (as in the common text). But as the best MSS. expunge it, so the sense resulting from its presence would have been really an insurmountable objection, for it is impossible to apply "quicken" to the spirit of Christ any more than to His divine nature. But, as we have seen, if one translates the latter term

“by the Spirit,” it is not correct to assume that we must translate the former “by the flesh.” The alleged necessity is just the mistake which falsifies the reasoning of many interpreters, and has mystified more readers.

Strictness of parallelism is to my mind more common in the limited scope of human thought than in the word of GOD, which habitually (I believe), while thus comparing or contrasting, gives a further and varying side of truth in the fulness of divine wisdom. Hence the mere technicality of the schools is sure to err in interpreting scripture. It does not follow therefore, that, when we see two datives balanced against each other, they must *both* be expressions of element, agency, or instrument, though it may be wise to avoid a greater precision in the rendering than the inspired original itself carries. At the same time such a difference is not advocated in the present instance; but, as the authorised translators rightly enough elsewhere represent *διὰ* twice by an English “for,” so “in” or “in respect of” will be found to suit both here. Consequently there is no such difficulty connected with the version or with the interpretation already given as to weaken it; still less, as some easily frightened have supposed, to convince us that it is untenable. Nor does it become the believer to hesitate because the plain meaning of scripture seems to favour a view opposed to his prejudice, though he would do well to examine closely what is really at issue with known truth. For “no

lie is of the truth": all that is true must be consistent. Only we must beware of confounding our limited apprehensions with the truth itself in all its breadth and depth.

But let us follow the reasoning a little more. If we hold the rendering "in" on both sides, there can be no doubt that "put to death" in flesh yields a simple and excellent sense. But what of "quickenened in the Spirit"? Is not this equally good, and as clear as the other? Strange to say, the true and plain antithesis seems to have quite escaped Dr. B., who allows us only the alternatives of "in His spirit" (which would be quite wrong, as we have often shown), or "in His divine nature," which is an impossible version, and, if possible, obviously absurd and false, as is admitted. But why not "in the Spirit" as presenting the manner of Christ's resurrection, characterised by the Spirit in contrast with the violent close of His life in flesh, in both cases the article being excluded by presenting each as a question of principle rather than of fact? On the other hand, "put to death by the flesh" is intolerable, either as the human nature of our Lord or as mankind. But there is no need to understand either if we take "by the Spirit" to mean the Holy Ghost, which to my mind is assuredly the truth; only presented in character rather than as an objective personal agent, which is quite common in Greek, though not so easily expressed in our tongue or caught by the English reader.

Nor can I for one see anything unnatural, but

rather great force and beauty, in pointing out that it was in virtue of the Spirit who thus wrought in His resurrection that Christ preached by Noah in the antediluvian world. For it was of the utmost importance for the Jews, who ever craved the visible in their thoughts of the Messiah and His kingdom, to learn that it is now, as of old, a question of a testimony in the Spirit to be believed or slighted, and surely to be followed by judgment; as then, so now. Hence, too, the preference to the Spirit's mind of presenting their past example as "spirits in prison" rather than as men living in flesh; which, however, He does also involve in their antecedent moral condition in the world when "once" or heretofore disobedient.

Such an allusion here to Genesis vi. 3 appears to a reflecting mind most apt and impressive, identifying Christ with Jehovah, as is often done in Peter's Epistles. It was natural in writing to Christians of the circumcision, and comforting them, in their sufferings and the contempt of their testimony, by the evidence given to the substantial sameness of its reception from the flood till the Lord returns in glory. This passage has in no way for its immediate object a description of the results of the Lord's atoning sufferings, bright as is the witness given to them, but rather to console the saints in their sufferings, apt to repine as Jews might at their trials ever since they believed in the Lord Jesus. The apostle explains to them the government of GOD in what He permits of sorrow to His own. Faithfulness does bring present blessing;

but even if suffering come for righteousness' sake, is not the saint now blessed? It is better, if GOD will it so, to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing; because Christ also once suffered for sins, Just for unjust, that He might bring us to GOD.

Such is the way His suffering for our sins is introduced, not a harsh interpolation (of His having, in the Spirit that raised Him, preached of old to the impenitent antediluvians) put into a statement of His atonement, but undeniable encouragement to downcast saints to go on suffering for righteousness, since it was His once for all to suffer for sins. With this, not they, but He only, had to do; and it is quite done—a work despised by sneering Jews, who felt not their sins nor their need of grace like His. But if put to death in flesh, He was quickened in the Spirit, in whose power* He had already gone and preached to the imprisoned spirits, once disobedient when the long-suffering of GOD waited out in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is eight, souls were saved through water, which was the destroying element.

They must not wonder then, if few were saved now; for this has ever been a favourite taunt of unbelief, as an absent Messiah who left His own in suffering would be to an incredulous Jew. Thus far the analogy with

* We have already seen that, if it were meant that Christ went down after death and as a disembodied spirit preached to the spirits in hades, the language is singularly ill-adapted to bear such a meaning. Observe that, if so, it must have been after He was quickened in Spirit (that is, *raised*, as well as put to death). The truth is however, that it is expressly said to be not personal, but *ἐν* *φ*, in which Spirit.

the times before and at the deluge is plain. So is the use of the allusion that follows; for as men were then waited on in long-suffering, it is not otherwise now; and as they are kept for a worse judgment, so will it be with such as despise the gospel. On the other hand, baptism is to the believer the sign of salvation by the death and resurrection of Christ; for as He died atoningly, so we, when baptised, are buried with Him in those waters of death; and as He rose, we through His resurrection have what a good conscience asks for, even acceptance before God by His work who is gone into heaven and is on God's right hand, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him. This, though invisible, is far beyond the throne of David on earth and the subjection of Gentile foes, as the Jews coveted.

What is Dr. B.'s explanation? Truly the notable one, that "a consequence of our Lord's penal, vicarious, expiatory suffering, was that He (!) became spiritually alive (!!) and powerful in a sense, and to a degree, in which He was not previously; and in which, but for these sufferings, He never could have become—full of life to be communicated to dead souls, mighty to save. He was there spiritually quickened." No wonder that Dr. B. has few to follow him in his view, though it is no worse than most others. But to be "quickened" is *not* to be a "quickening Spirit," though both be true of our Lord. Neither does John v. 26 speak of the Lord in resurrection but as a man here below, the Servant of His Father's glory; nor does Matthew

xxviii. 18 speak of either quickened or quickening, but only as Son of man invested with authority in heaven and on earth. And if this be violent as to Christ, not less so is the notion that by "the spirits in prison" are meant "spiritually captive men." A strange phrase indeed, as the author allows; stranger still if possible, though Dr. B. sees nothing perplexing in the statement, "that they were aforetime disobedient in the days of Noah"; as if it meant that Christ preached to spiritually captive men who were hard to be convinced in former times, especially in Noah's day. But this is to pervert, not to expound.

If Dr. B. had been a scholar and had examined the passage, he must have seen that the absence of the article before ἀπειθήσασιν arises from the disobedience being viewed as the ground why the spirits were in prison. There is no hint of an aggregate, *some part* of which had been disobedient in former times. In short, the view is mistaken altogether; for, instead of employing "spirits in prison" as a phrase characteristic of men in all ages, Peter speaks there of a special class disembodied and in custody or prison, because they had been once on a time disobedient in the days of Noah: not a word about their being turned to the wisdom of the just and delivered after Christ's resurrection. These steps of departure from the text emboldened Dr. B. to go farther still and contrast the multitudes that heard and knew the joyful sound with the few saved in Noah's day. "Still is He going and preaching to 'spirits in prison'; and though all have

not obeyed, yet many already have obeyed, many are obeying, many more will yet obey." And this is a comment on 1 Peter iii. 19, 20! where one prime aim is to comfort the Christian Jews subject to the taunts of their enemies on their own fewness, as compared with the masses who reject the truth of the gospel. The saved are comparatively few alas! now as in Noah's day. There is analogy, not contrast. So the apostle teaches.

But this is not all. "This view of the subject has this additional advantage, that it preserves the connection of the passage both grammatical and logical." We have seen enough of the grammar: let us see as to the "logic." "The words of the apostle, thus explained, plainly bear on his great practical object. 'Be not afraid, be not ashamed of suffering in a good cause, in a right spirit.' No damage comes from well-doing, or from suffering in well-doing. Christ in suffering, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, suffered for well-doing." "For well-doing!" does the author say? Happily little logic suffices to test this view of the context; for the scripture here says, in the most pointed terms of contradiction, that Christ suffered once *for sins*, not for well-doing.

Dr. Bartle's book (*The Scriptural Doctrine of Hades*)* may be briefly noticed so far as it alludes to our text, which he pronounces most extraordinary, because, after all that has been written by ancients and moderns, and notwithstanding the learning and erudi-

* Third edition, London, 1871.

tion expended on it, the passage is still involved in much obscurity. He himself proposes a solution, which, he tells us, differs entirely from the expositions of any of those who have hitherto written on the subject. (Page 63.) Now one of the tests of a true or a false explanation is whether the light shines thereby or the darkness abides. If any scripture is still involved in obscurity, there is the strongest presumption that its meaning is as yet unknown.

Whether Dr. B.'s view be well founded remains to be shown. His denial that the paradise (to which the converted robber went with our Lord on the day of the crucifixion) is in heaven seems rather an unhappy beginning. (Page 67.) Dr. B. reasons that the robber spoke to Jesus as supreme GOD, that the words "with Me" are to be understood as referring exclusively to His divine character, and that therefore the meaning of the promise is, not that the spirit of the condemned malefactor was with the spirit of Christ in heaven, but that he was with Jesus only as the Omnipresent GOD, according to Psalm cxxxix. 7-19! His frightful doctrine is, that, while the penitent thief quitted the earth in a forgiven state, and was therefore among the blessed, Christ, being a substitute after the cross as well as on it, had still to suffer in the other world that measure of punishment allotted by divine justice to sinful man. It denies the work finished by the offering up of His body. This is heterodoxy. It separates the natures of Christ no less than Christ and the robber in

paradise. Touch His work or His person, and our best privileges are immediately shaken. In this Dr. B. seems to affect both fatally.

But, as to the passage itself, Dr. B. tells us that those who regard it as a statement of Christ's preaching by His Spirit in Noah seem to forget that He is represented to have effected it *in His own person*. (Page 90.) This, however, is not the fact. He is declared to have done it by or in *Spirit*; as the Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, is declared by the same apostle in the same Epistle to have testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

Further, it has been already shown that the use of the preposition (ἐν ᾧ) is not immaterial, and that the anarthrous form (πν.) is perfectly correct. The quickening and the preaching, therefore, are not absolutely analogous, as he argues. It is not true that Christ is said by the apostle to have done anything whatever during His disembodied state. But, even if a personal action of Christ were here intended, it would seem most natural to place it after His resurrection, not during His disembodiment; for there can be no just doubt that "quickened by the Spirit" refers to resurrection. But Dr. B. himself owns that Christ *preaching* to the spirits in the prison of hades involves very grave difficulties, arising from its apparent inconsistency with numerous declarations of the word of God. He maintains from Luke xvi. the impossibility of an alterable condition in the next world for the

departed righteous or wicked; and so far he is quite right. A great gulf *is* fixed, and there is no passing it from either side.

What then does Dr. B. propose? An amended translation, "Because Christ also once suffered for sins, a Just for unjust persons, in order that He might bring us to GOD, being put to death indeed in the body, but enlivened in the Spirit, in which Spirit He also went and cried aloud in prison, among those spirits who formerly believed not," etc. (Page 89.) It is first to be observed that *ζωοποιηθεὶς* means not "enlivened," but "quickened," as has been already shown with precision.* Secondly, "cried aloud" is an impossible rendering of *ἐκήρυξεν*. The passage quoted from the *Hecuba* of Euripides (145) proves nothing of the sort. To *invoke* is not to "cry aloud" as a sufferer. In the very few classical instances where the word bears the peculiar meaning of invocation, *κ.* has an object which determines the sense, whereas here it is without one. But its New Testament meaning is to preach or publish; and the reason alleged for a variation here (that it is the only place in which it refers to one who was in a state of *suffering*) is a mere and unfounded assumption. There is no more real ground to deny an active subject here than anywhere else in the New Testament. It is not true that the apostle was in this clause concerned with the voluntary

* Dr. B. says quickened or enlivened because His spiritual personality or soul ceased to perform its functions through a body. (Page 104.) This, however, would also require the article *τῷ πν.*, which, we know, is contrary to the best MSS.

sufferings of Christ, any more than with the desire of the Saviour to be delivered from those sufferings; for this slights the value of the conjunction "also" (ἐν ᾧ καὶ). The apostle states it as a distinct fact, and connects it with the Spirit's power by which He was quickened.

The attempt also to gather support from the supposed derivation of κηρύσσω from the Chaldaic ܠܒܐ proves rather the contrary, for Daniel v. 29 in no way supports the notion of crying out in suffering.* Nor is it true that the word ἐκήρυξεν should be followed by an objective case, if the apostle had been desirous of impressing on our minds the definite notion of publishing the gospel; for if Mark xvi. 15 expresses the gospel, Mark i. 38 leaves it out, and yet who can doubt the meaning? So does Mark iii. 14, nay, even chapter xvi. 20—the very context to which Dr. B. appeals for the contrary. The rest of the New Testament would still more fully disprove the notion, but what we have referred to is surely enough.

Then again it is to corrupt scripture, not to translate it, if one represents Peter as saying that He "cried aloud in prison among those spirits who formerly believed not." It has been already pointed out in an earlier part of this essay that the apostle says nothing about preaching in prison, but that Christ by (or in the power of) the Spirit preached to the

* The theory that "Christ" and "Jesus Christ" respectively distinguished between our Lord's suffering and glory (p. 199), is at once disproved by a simple reference to scripture, say, to Romans viii. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 8; Heb. ii. 9; x. 10, etc.

spirits that are there, which is a wholly different proposition. For this leaves it to be decided by the context, if not by other scriptures, whether the preaching was there, or only the persons preached to were because they heeded not the preaching, as indeed the next clause of the verse lets us know is the truth.

Now it is obvious that the Greek does not intimate that Christ cried aloud (even if the word could bear this meaning, which would rather be *ἐκραξεν*) in prison; it tells us of the imprisoned spirits of those contemplated in Christ's *κήρυγμα* or rather *κήρυξις* by the Spirit. To bear the desired meaning *ἐν φυλακῇ* must have been put with *ἐκήρυξεν*, instead of being entrenched in its present position apart, as it is most firmly. Further, it is equally an error to suppose that the original text can possibly mean "among the spirits," etc. Were the words *ἐν φ. μετὰ τῶν πνευμάτων, κ.τ.λ.*, there would be something answering to what is set out in his English: as it is, there is not even a distant resemblance. Again, the Greek does not say "who formerly believed not"; for this would require the article, the absence of which indicates that their former disobedience in Noah's day was the ground, occasion, or circumstance antecedent to their being in prison.

Our readers will therefore gather that of all expositions Dr. B.'s is perhaps the least satisfactory, and of all translations, known to me, certainly the most inexact. Many have failed in one phrase or another; Dr. B., in all that is of consequence to the right understanding of the passage, though clear

enough in rejecting most of the counter-interpretations. For (1) it is impossible to sustain that "the spirits in prison" mean the blessed on high; (2) it is contrary to the tenor of scripture to allow of a preaching to the lost in hell; (3) it is a paltry view that no more is meant than the Gentiles in bondage to idolatry till they heard the gospel; (4) the notion of purgatory being intended here is quite untenable and inconsistent. For it is not Romish doctrine to have Christ preaching to souls there (at least for prospective grace); it is to have masses now said and paid for on their behalf.

All who look into the passage must in fairness concede, that the singling out of the spirits of the antediluvians (who perished for their indifference to Noah, preacher of righteousness as he was), for Christ to preach to them in person after His death, is not only without the smallest support from general scripture teaching or any passage in particular, but wears every appearance of caprice, being both without moral motives and opposed to the most solemn considerations derivable from GOD'S word. On the view that Peter means Christ's preaching by the Spirit in Noah to the men of his day, one can readily understand that those who were about to be visited by an unexampled destruction might well have a special warning; and that all this should be turned by the apostle to the present or future profit of those who hear the gospel that is now preached. For Jews especially were disposed to slight anything short of

open signs and displays of power. They little thought that, while not reigning as David's Son over Israel and their land, now too He in Spirit is preaching before He comes personally in judgment of the habitable earth. Indeed all who have despised His admonitions, and fallen in such solemn dealings, await what is still more awful at the close. For then is eternal judgment when the dead, small and great, stand before the throne and are judged according to their works by Him who, unseen and gone into heaven, is at GOD'S right hand, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him. Even now is He Himself ready to judge the quick and the dead.

There is another work* to be noticed before this treatise is brought to a close, because it seeks to yoke our text with the general bearing of the unholy scheme of universalism. Not that there is anything intrinsically which calls for a notice; but that the work bears witness to the prevalence of the infidel thought, now put forth without a blush by professing ministers of Christ, and spread far and wide by those regarded as respectable publishers. The usual guarantees of orthodoxy fast vanish away.

"That even as to the saints, the intermediate state between death and the resurrection will be one of progression I firmly believe, and on that point I shall have something more to say in my next sermon. But

* *The Kingdom of Christ: its ultimate, complete, and universal triumph over evil, in the subjection and reconciliation of all things to God.* By Rev. A. R. SYMONDS, M.A., Wadham College, Oxford. London, 1873. Hamilton and Adams, etc.

what of those who die in utter ignorance of the truth as it is in Jesus or in conscious rejection of it? If ultimately all things are to be reconciled to God, if the kingdom of Christ is to eventuate in the restoration of all things, then it is evident in regard to those who are not saved from sin and brought to God in this life, there must be some provision for their rectification and restoration in an after state of existence. Let it be admitted that holy scripture does most clearly and distinctly teach that all things in heaven and earth are to be gathered up again into one in Christ, and that by Him everything is to be brought into subjection to God, that in His name everything is to bend and every tongue to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father; let this be admitted, and I do not see how the inference can be escaped that, even though there were no specific revelation on the point, there must be some provision hereafter for the reconciliation and restoration of those who in this life have not been reconciled and restored." (Pages 135, 136.)

It need surprise none that in his next sermon Mr. S. has not one word to prove the alleged progression of saints in the intermediate state. "The life, then" (says he), "of the sainted dead, we may believe, is one of blessed hope and holy expectation; and if, as before said, it be one also of nearer communion with God and Christ, we may believe it to be a life of progress and development," etc. (Page 150.) But supposing we believe nothing of the sort without

scripture, what then has he to say? Nothing. The idea of growth is altogether unwarranted by revelation, and contrary to every instinct of the believer, who weighs the force of what scripture does say on our sojourn here below as the place of growth, exercise, and testimony. We turn however to what is of even graver concern, the perversion of the scriptures, which speak of reconciling and restoring *all things*, to draw a similar conclusion as to the impenitent and unbelieving, in the teeth of the plainest and most solemn warnings of GOD. Every believer must feel the utter fallacy of such arguments.

Thus, on the one hand, Colossians i. distinguishes between "you hath He reconciled" and reconciling "all things." But even so, they are only "the things on the earth and the things in the heavens"; not a word about the things infernal. The apostle does not speak of *persons*; they are nowhere before us in this reconciliation of "all things." It is a question of the universe, not of men: "all things" are contradistinguished from the saints, who are already and expressly said to be "now reconciled," whereas the reconciliation of all things is of course future, "to reconcile" etc.

On the other hand, when the Spirit of GOD treats the *subjection* of every creature to the Lord, infernal beings are just as distinctly added to those heavenly and earthly (Phil. ii.); because the point here is the compulsory bowing of every knee and the confession of every tongue. Reconciliation therefore is

carefully avoided. For judgment is beyond question the means GOD the Father will use to enforce the honour of His Son on the unbelieving (John v.), as the gift of eternal life bows the heart of the believer now before His glory and His love.

Ephesians i. quite confirms this evident and important truth. For we have there shown to us the mystery of GOD's will, according to the good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, for the administration of the fulness of the times, to gather up together (or, head up) all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth. Here we see that infernal things or beings are quite left out of this blessed gathering under His headship; and, secondly, that the saints, or the church, do not form a part of "all things," in heaven or earth, but are associated with Christ in His inheritance over them all. Compare not only verse 11 but also 22, and indeed scripture in general. It is the universe, distinguished from those who reign with Christ over it, which is meant by "all things."

Thus the awful revelation of the unending punishment of the ungodly and unbelieving remains intact and unqualified; and the mischievous and wicked folly is exposed of such as would distort the disclosure of the regeneration of creation, or "restitution of all things," into a spurious hope for the final recovery of the lost. Not a hint of such expectations appears in scripture. The alleged passages refer to the inheritance or to the judgment, not to the heirs or to salva-

tion. To the deliverance of the groaning creation, of which Paul speaks in Romans viii., the prophets bear witness; not one, nor a single shred of either Testament, to the reconciliation and restoration of those who in this life have not been reconciled and restored. With this falls all possibility of such an inference legitimately.

But Mr. S. thinks that there is even a direct intimation in the passage before us, wherein St. Peter tells us how Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison. His short paraphrase however is quite wrong; and he only adds to the number of those he characterises as trying to make the text mean almost anything but what it does mean, if taken in the simple literality of its words. We utterly deny, for reasons already given, that it speaks of or means a preaching to spirits in another state of existence. A superficial glance might so construe it, not a careful or exact examination of what is said.

“Suffering death” (says Mr. S., p. 138) “as far as the flesh was concerned, His body being put to death upon the cross, but continuing to live in respect of His spirit, which did not die, but passed from the body on its dying, and descended into hell, that is, hades, the place of disembodied spirits, ‘in which also,’ says the apostle, that is, in His spirit, ‘He went and preached to the spirits in prison.’”

Now this paraphrase is manifestly and hopelessly inaccurate. “Continuing to live” is a false rendering of *ζωοποιηθεῖς*, which is the less excusable, as the

Authorised Version in this respect gives the only correct translation. Again, "in respect of His Spirit" is ignorance or neglect of the true text, which has no article in the Greek; if "His Spirit" were meant, the idiom would require it. As it is, the Holy Spirit is intended, though this be rather as a characteristic state than drawing attention to the person who so wrought in power. Compare 2 Timothy iii. 16, where, as here, it is hard in our language to avoid the article; but it is "the Spirit" that is meant, certainly not "His spirit." Lastly, the interpretation of the clause is false; for as a whole it points to our Lord's resurrection, not to His spirit's passing from the body on His dying, to say nothing of foisting in here a descent into hell or hades, of which the passage says not a word, but "in which [Spirit] also" He went and preached to the spirits in prison. That is, Christ in Spirit went and preached to them. Not a word intimates that the disembodied spirit of Christ went there; not a word that He personally preached in the prison, disembodied or not; not a word that they, when preached to, were spirits in prison. There are of course precise phrases in the Greek tongue for expressing any of these ideas, which the paraphrase assumes. As they are not employed, the only fair and sound inference is that they were not meant; and that the paraphrase departs really from the letter and spirit of the words, which we are quite content to take as they are, refusing every sense save that which flows from their precise grammatical import.

Nor is it allowable to Mr. S. to cite the late Dean Alford for what these words mean; for he expressly declares that they do *not* mean "universal restitution" (Mr. S.'s hypothesis), any more than the Romanist dream of purgatory. "It is not purgatory, it is not universal restitution; but it is one which throws blessed light on one of the darkest enigmas of the divine justice: the cases where the final doom seems infinitely out of proportion to the lapse which incurred it." Did the Dean realise his own thought? In good sooth he did not; for the real difficulty to speculating benevolence is not GOD's visiting the antediluvian rejecters of Noah's preaching in the destruction of the deluge, but the everlasting punishment of all unbelievers. There is no darkening of divine justice in the former, any more than a ray of light cast on the latter in this passage. It is implied indeed, that, besides perishing by the deluge, their spirits are kept shut up for the day of judgment; but one can hardly imagine that this is the "blessed light" Dean A. cherished in his lively and poetical mind. It is certain at least that he explicitly denies that the words mean that universal restitution which Mr. S. would draw from them: what he himself inferred is left, purposely or not, in the utmost vagueness.

So it is apt to be where we have not consciously the known truth of GOD. The hint is even thrown out, of which Mr. S. does not fail to avail himself, consistently enough on the scheme of universalism; most inconsistently on Dean A.'s, if indeed he had anything

definite before his mind. "And as we cannot say to what other cases this *κήρυγμα* may have applied, so it would be presumption in us to limit its occurrence or its efficacy. The reason of mentioning here these sinners, above other sinners, appears to be their connection with the type of baptism which follows. If so, who shall say that the blessed act was confined to them?" (Comm. *in loco*.) To faith the real presumption seems the fancy of an efficacy which the context disproves, and the hinting at an enlargement of its occurrence without the smallest evidence. Undoubtedly that the Spirit of Christ preached to those spirits in prison was a "blessed act." All we know of the result for those preached to is that they were "disobedient, and suffered its consequences in being kept" shut up (as Dean Alford says) "in the place of the departed awaiting the final judgment": a description which in no way suits the deceased saints, who are with Christ in paradise, and come not into judgment. One may boldly say that the "blessed act" Dean A. fancies, of our Lord's preaching in hades to the disembodied unbelievers of Noah's day, not only was not repeated to any other class, but has no warrant from scripture in the case reasoned on. It never once was a fact.

It is useless after these remarks to quote all the arguments of Mr. S. in which he enlarges for his own purpose the words thus rashly flung out by the late Dean of Canterbury. But the reader will learn how things grow worse and worse in this line from his

conclusion (p. 139): "Yet it is these notable sinners who are especially mentioned as having been preached to by Christ on His descent into hades. If to *these* then surely to all, may we believe, was the announcement made," etc.

Nor is one disposed to give the least weight to the reasoning Mr. S. reproduces from Dean Plumptre's sermon. It is absurd to argue, as he and some of the fathers do, from Ephesians iv. 9, 10. Not a word connects the spirits of the departed with "the lower parts of the earth." Nor is it the reverence believers owe to GOD and His word to quit revelation for analogy and human reasons, whatever one may use for stopping the mouth of an infidel if we truthfully can.

Once committed to the uncertain guesses of the mind, how can one avoid being tossed as waves and carried about by every wind of teaching? "May we not be permitted to indulge the thought" (says Mr. S., p. 142) "that as the Lord Jesus in His spirit went, in the interval between His death and resurrection, and preached to the spirits in prison, so possibly this may form part of the blessed occupation of the saints in hades? They rest indeed, we are told, from their labours, so far as weariness is connected with them, and yet their works do follow them. May it not be that the work in which they delighted here, that of winning souls, shall follow them there? If, it has been well observed [by the aforesaid Dean],—*if* the future is to be the development and continuation of the present, if we are not to pass from a life of ever-

varying relations with our fellow-men, each bringing with it opportunities for self-discipline and for serving GOD to an absolute isolation, may we not so get one step further and believe, as some did in the earliest ages of the Church, and as others have thought of late, that those whose joy it has been in life to be fellow-workers with Christ, in leading many to righteousness, may continue to be fellow-workers there, and so share the life of angels in their work of services as in their ministries of praise? The manifestations of GOD's righteous judgment and of His changeless love may thus, using men and angels as His instruments, help to renew throughout His universe all who are capable of renewal!"

Thus sadly is it our lot to see, in these last days of a fallen but no longer slumbering Christendom, that the anile fables of early legend-mongers find ready acceptance among those who turn away their ears from the truth. The Holy Spirit has prepared us for these and all other aberrations. For as surely as the wise virgins have obeyed the midnight cry, "Behold, the bridegroom: come forth to meet him," the foolish are going hither and thither to buy that "unction from the Holy One"; the lack of which no religious zeal, no sentimental activity, disguises at last from consciences even unpurged, from hearts which have never found rest in Christ the Lord.

Little did the early fathers, little do the modern ritualists and rationalists, suspect that in these dreams of preaching in the unseen world to such as heard not

in this world, and thus continuing the work of grace in the separate state, they are in principle reproducing the reveries of the heathen, who knew not God and sought His word. Instead of this they fell a prey to human imagination, and pictured to themselves an occupation after death as akin as possible to the life which now is. The chief difference among such as profess the Lord's name is, that they conceive a continuance of Christian forms, instead of merely earthly habits and enjoyments.

As we wait for new heavens and a new earth may we be diligent to be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless, and account the long-suffering of our Lord salvation! Whether it be the Epistles of Peter or of Paul, the untaught and ill-established wrest them, as also the other scriptures, to their own destruction.

Since the foregoing was written, Dr. E. W. Bullinger's pamphlet (fifth edition revised, 1898) has appeared. He is not aware that its distinctive point was long ago presented by a former and respected Rector of Fethard, Mr. H. Woodward. "The conjecture then, which I propose without further preface, is that the imprisoned spirits spoken of in the nineteenth verse are fallen angels" (*Essays*, 186, second edition, 1836). He too reasons from Gen. vi. 2; Job i. and xxxviii.; Heb. i. 7, 14; 2 Peter ii. and Jude, with "seen of angels" in 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Dr. B. begins with the design and scope of the Epistle. The apostle has himself decided, and decided

against Dr. B., that he wrote to Christian Jews only, though of course for the edifying of all the faithful. But he addressed "strangers of the dispersion," a category applicable not to Gentiles but solely to Israelites, in a very large part of Asia Minor, as indeed such was his province as apostle of the circumcision. Ch. ii. 10 does not include Gentiles, any more than do i. 14 and iv. 3. When Paul, in Rom. ix., cites Hosea for the call of Gentiles, he cites Hosea i., as Peter cites for his purpose Hosea ii. The other texts merely indicate how the Jews there had sunk to the low level of their Gentile neighbours practically. But it is agreed that trial and persecution had set in; nobody perhaps doubts this. The apostle was to strengthen his brethren; and so he does here.

Next, in p. 8 we come to the question, and first the fact that $\tau\hat{\omega}$ before $\pi\nu$. is rejected by the best critics, though read by perhaps all the editions before the A.V. of 1 Peter iii. 18. But in p. 9 "Holy Spirit" is repeatedly given as the sense. This is erroneous, for it would require the omitted article. The rendering of the A.V. is not so far wrong, though it is better to avoid "by" with "spirit" if we have "in" with "flesh." They are antithetical, and if we say "in respect to" we can say it of both. But it is not possible to justify the inference from the true text, "that though as regards His flesh Christ was put to death, yet as regards His Spirit He was quickened or made alive" (p. 9). It is as unsound philologically as in theology. In no way is it justifiable. Undoubtedly

the second member refers to resurrection; but how can any legitimately draw "the body" from "His Spirit"? This is an error which the anarthrous construction repels; for *πνεύματι* without *τῷ* cannot mean "His Spirit." The true text points to the Spirit of GOD, as I have already shown, and Dr. B. can verify it in his own dictionary, in Bruder's Concordance, or in any good text of the Greek N.T.

Our tongue does not always admit of the Greek anarthrous expression. If it did, we might say, "Put to death indeed in flesh, but made alive in Spirit." But English requires for most ears "in [the] Spirit." It is a simple difference of idiom, and does not affect the sense intended. In respect of natural life here below (or flesh) He was put to death on the one hand, as on the other in respect of Spirit, or as we say the Spirit, He was quickened, when raised from the dead. Thus, though the A.V. varied the preposition needlessly, their version is right in substance, and Dr. B. is clearly wrong. He seems aware of mistake somewhere, though unable to discern how it came about; for he admits of course that "as regards His Spirit He was always alive," and therefore the quickening cannot apply to His Spirit; yet this is just what his argument does imply. But if the text really and only means "quickened in Spirit," *i.e.* GOD's Spirit, the difficulty vanishes. For the characteristic phrase expresses the Spirit's action in quickening after Christ was put to death in flesh.

"Quickened" never means "always alive," any more

than "His Spirit" can mean His body risen from the grave. Neither the text nor 1 Cor. xv. 45 sanctions such teaching (p. 10). In p. 11 it is remarkable how ἐν ᾧ [in the power of which] is left out of what is called "the glory of the triumph" Christ immediately received when risen; "He went and preached to the in-prison spirits." The difference between ἐκήρυξεν (as here said absolutely) and εὐηγγελίσθη (iv. 6) is justly stated; and it is as necessary for the true interpretation of those "spirits" as for the strange doctrine here taught. Notably too, though p. 18 puts together πορ. in verse 19 and the same word in verse 22, it was already said in p. 13 that the proclamation of it [His triumph] was so far-reaching that it extended "even to the in-prison spirits." But unless it were a local going to Tartarus, there was not "perfect correspondence." If he really holds that Christ risen went there in person, what comes of the intimation that it was in virtue of the same Spirit, that quickened Him when dead, He went and preached? Is it not language suited to convey a preaching not in bodily presence but in the Spirit? Can one be surprised that the pamphlet says so little about this visit?

The main peculiarity is next described (pp. 18-20). Were "the spirits" those of men who once lived and disobeyed the word? Or, as Dr. B. affirms, were they fallen angels? He argues on the absence of qualifying words, such as are in Heb. xii. 23. This again is singular misconception. For the imprisoned spirits are qualified "as heretofore disobedient," *i.e.* to the

preaching in Noah's days. Men, not angels, are the objects of preaching, or the subjects of unbelieving disobedience. On the showing of the scripture cited, the sin alleged in Second Peter and Jude was a horrible rebellion against the divine demarcation between angels and mankind. Nor does Moses any more than the N.T. characterise the offending angels as disobedient to preaching. Jehovah's Spirit strove with *man*, but would not more than a hundred and twenty years; whereas angels are branded as having sinned and not kept their own first estate or principality, but left their proper habitation. Therefore were they dealt with exceptionally and consigned to Tartarus, while reserved for judgment of the great day, instead of being allowed freedom to tempt like the rest. "The demons also believe and shudder" (James ii. 19). They all knew and know their doom, they are not blinded like man.

Again, our Lord in Luke xxiv. 39, compared with 37 (and see Matt. xiv. 26), explains "spirit." "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have," even when risen. He had a "spiritual body," and was not a mere "spirit," though a quickening spirit. Granted that angels are spirits, but so is man when disembodied, whether the Lord Himself before He rose (Matt. xxvii. 50; John xix. 30), saints (Acts vii. 59; Heb. xii. 23; Rev. xxii. 6, as rightly read), or the unbelieving (1 Peter iii. 19). Soul ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) is the "ego" or "I," the seat of personal identity, and therefore predicable of men alive or dead, as in ver. 20, etc., for the former;

or Rev. vi. 9; xx. 4, for the latter; while *πνεῦμα* expresses the spiritual capacity, inseparable from the soul, wherein is the working of the will. They compose the inner man, as the body is the outer.

Thus responsibility is, if we may so say, *in* the soul, *about* the spirit and the body. One may be a rebel against GOD by that spiritual capacity in disobedience of His word, while by it in faith the renewed man enjoys and serves GOD, as the body is the outward instrument, or obeying or disobeying Him openly.

Dr. B. (p. 20) confounds "the angel" with "the Spirit" in Acts viii. 26, 29, 39 (cf. Acts xii. 23 and Acts xiii. 2), as he misinterprets "the seven Spirits" in Rev. i. 4 and iv. 5, of angelic beings. Think of creatures, however exalted, placed between the Eternal and the Lord Jesus, and sending grace and peace to the saints! That the Holy Ghost should be presented, not in His unity as in the rest of the N.T., but in the divine perfections of His power in the great book of prophecy, as in Isa. xi., might be a difficulty to his mind; but piety ought to have preserved a believer from a statement so hazardous, unsound, and irreverent. In p. 18 (note) he even seems unwilling to allow that spirits of just ones made perfect were certainly those of men in the separate state, and to suggest the alternative of "their angels"! His view of Heb. xii. 22-24, as referring to the *Heavenly* host in contrast to 18-21 or *Earthly* things, is a manifest blunder; for the very first object is Mount Zion, which is assuredly not heavenly, though the most GOD-honoured site of earth. It is

really a series of glory which rises from earth up to God, and then descends again. The divine purpose comprehends all things to be put under Christ, whether heavenly or earthly (Eph. i.; Col. i.)

Again, why did Dr. B., in giving his own version of vers. 18, 19 (as in p. 21), perpetuate the slipshod error of "which were disobedient" for the anarthrous ἀπειθήσασιν? For it expresses not the fact as such, but their disobedience causatively or as the reason for their being in prison.

Nevertheless Dr. B. strenuously rejects the evil and mischievous misuse which amiable men like the late Deans Alford and Plumptre made of our text. For in p. 24 he denounces "the new doctrine of probation for men after death, which is foreign to the word of God; which is repugnant to scripture truth; which has no relation to the context; and, moreover, is utterly destitute of all logic," etc. Has he not himself missed capital parts of the contextual appeal? Their unbelieving brethren looked for a kingdom of power and glory on the earth if Messiah had really come. They taunted the believing Jews with their exposure to suffering. This Peter answers by Christ's necessary and blessed suffering for sins, which was His alone and but "once" atoningly, while we share those for righteousness and love. What did they care for His acting by the Spirit? They panted only for the "first dominion," and for all the nations to own it. Hence the importance of pointing to His testimony by the Spirit before the deluge, by which the disobedient

perished, as at His appearing will those who despise His Spirit now. Did they reproach the Christian Jews with their fewness? Very much fewer were preserved in Noah's days.

As for Dr. Sanderson's little book on *The Life of the Waiting Soul*, it is a dark denial of the gospel. He believes neither in the real salvation of the saint, nor in the total ruin of the finally impenitent. This comes out in his opening address (on 1 Thess. iv. 13). From the first page of the second (p. 13), it seems, he does not like that a good man's soul should go straight to heaven, escaping the day of judgment.

Hear our Saviour's ruling in John v. 24 (R.V.): "Verily, verily, I say to you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." Here is no ambiguity. It was too plain for many of old as for many now. Hence the fear of grace, which changed the true rendering into "condemnation" in the A.V. and some others, not in the Vulgate. It is not *κατάκριμα* however, but *κρίσις*. This noun, and the corresponding verb to "judge," the context requires as imperatively as philology.

The Lord throughout contrasts life (life eternal) with judgment. All for man turns on receiving or rejecting Himself. He that receives Him by faith *has* this wondrous life (for He is our life as believers), and *comes not into judgment*; which is for those who in unbelief reject Him and so must be judged by Him. He is Son of GOD, giving life to those that believe;

Son of man to judge unbelievers. Hence He tells of a resurrection of life at His coming, and afterwards a resurrection of judgment, exactly as in Rev. xx.; where we have the first resurrection for the blessed, and the judgment at the close for those whose names were not found written in the Lamb's book of life.

All shall give account to GOD (Rom. xiv.); all shall be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall receive according to the deeds of the body. But this is not judgment, save for those who, rejecting Christ (2 Cor. v.), die in their sins. Those who are Christ's are justified even now by faith. Unbelievers, who refuse Him and His redemption, must be judged; and they perish justly, for their works are evil. The day of judgment will be no contradiction of the believer's justification. The gospel declares it individually; the church witnesses it corporately; as the Lord will manifest it gloriously in that day. It is only unbelief which sets all in confusion. Take Heb. ix. 27, 28, as a clear corroboration of this on the ground of redemption, as John v. on the ground of life eternal. "And as it is appointed to men once to die, and after this judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time apart from sin to them that wait for Him unto salvation." Dr. S. sees only the natural man's portion; faith receives Christ's sacrifice and waits for salvation in contrast with judgment.

How incredulous in p. 16 is his comment on Luke

xxiii. 43!* “Was Paradise, then, another name for heaven? It cannot be; our Lord did not go to heaven until the day of His ascension, forty-three days after His death.” Has he never weighed 2 Cor. xii. 2-4? or Rev. ii. 7? The paradise of GOD is not only heavenly but its choicest part, as Adam’s was of the earth. The Lord commends His spirit to the Father, whereas John xx. 17 speaks of His bodily presence there; just as 2 Cor. v. 8 and Phil. i. identify the believer’s departure and being with Christ, or present with the Lord. Is He then not in heaven? His system is an idle and evil dream, at issue with the first principles of Christian truth.

In pp. 44, 45 he repeats the common error as to “spirit” in 1 Peter iii. 18, the sole ground of which lies in the $\tau\omega$ which all true criticism explodes. The

* Even Dean Alford, who unhappily wrote too much to spread this dangerous delusion, says, “Surely the reply to the penitent thief implies a *πορευθῆναι*, and in that *πορευθῆναι* a joy and triumph sufficient to be the subject of a consoling promise at that terrible moment.” Now the force of that blessed episode of the crucified robber’s appeal of faith is, that the Saviour gave him to know on this side the grave, and at that moment, that he should not have to wait for His remembrance in His kingdom, but should have part with Himself that very day in paradise. By the gospel Christ has annulled death, and brought life and incorruption to light. Thus has *He* thrown blessed light on what unbelief still ventures to call “the darkest enigma of divine justice.” Surely the apostle Peter did not write to contradict the apostle Paul, nor claim to announce a posthumous gospel to solace the “disobedient.” As the application of mercy to the antediluvian unbelievers is mere infatuation, yet more presumptuous is it to deduce or to fancy its occurrence or its efficacy for other reprobates without limit. This one cannot but regretfully call a snare of Satan.

anarthrous πν., as every scholar who reflects must recognise, does not admit of His human "spirit," but only of the divine. So false too is the note in p. 72. In p. 73 it is equally untrue that "St. Peter now tells us what His spirit did there"—i.e. in paradise. Of a prison or custody he spoke, not of paradise. It is only Dr. S. who confounds them. It is not said that Christ's human spirit visited the imprisoned spirits, but that they are there as having been formerly disobedient when *in the Spirit* He went and preached by Noah.

Not a word of GOD countenances the notion of Christ's "disembodied soul" visiting them in their safe keeping, but that they are there in consequence of their guilt in disobeying His proclamation by the Spirit, and this in Noah's days. Nor is anything said of "the good news of the gospel"; it is expressly and only "proclaiming," as to the Ninevites, in contrast with dead saints in 1 Peter iv. 6 who were "evangelised" when living. Dr. S.'s "facts," p. 75, are entirely fictitious. His deduction is as illogical as his doctrine is unsound. Does it not strike him or anybody as beyond measure harsh that Jehovah's Spirit should strive with them only for 120 years when living, and that He should to these spirits only again preach in the unseen world?*

* Well might the learned J. Elsner ask (*Observ. Sacrae*, in N.F. Libros, ii. 407), "Cur quaeso ostentasse sese diceretur spiritibus solis diluvianis, nec Diabolo potius, Judaeis mortuis, Judae proditori, et Herodi regi? Nec Tartarus sed Golgotha locus fuit istius ostentationis triumphalis, Paulo doctore (Col. ii. 14, 15), ut alia quae Theologia suppeditat taceam."

congruities. Not a word of GOD implies "a chance, as we say, of salvation." The text before us spoke not of those who never heard, but of such as "disobeyed." Then follows the same wild speculation, as with the more childish of the fathers, on Christ's servants carrying on His gospel work in the unseen world (pp. 78, 79). This is worse still, and blinds men to GOD's present call: "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

Dean Luckock's volume on *The Intermediate State*, though in a new and cheaper edition, need not detain us long. He belongs to the Oxford school of sacramental and ecclesiastical retrogradism. Prejudice betrays itself as early as the note to p. 3; he objects to "up" in 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. Now what difference of sense would be in "*rapt* as far as third heaven," or *caught up* into paradise? Certainly *snatch down* would be quite false. The connection of paradise is not with heaven only, but its highest scene, "third heaven," from which he has no right to separate paradise as he does. John xi. encourages no such speculation as to Lazarus. Even Tennyson's verse was more reverent. *Not* to the imprisoned spirits did Christ's spirit pass in dying, but to the Father; and there the converted robber was the same day with Him. There He risen and ascended is now, as none questions; and with Him there are all the faithful on their departure to be present with the Lord. Dr. L. shares not the faith of the apostle, but the gloomy unbelief of the fathers and their modern imitators. Yet, though "very far

better," it is not the best of all which awaits Christ's coming for the resurrection of life or glorious change.

From the chapters that follow, with heaps of mistakes flowing out of ignorance of Christian standing, church state, and even a full gospel, let us turn to chapter xiv. on our text in 1 Peter iii. He admits that such weighty names as J. Pearson, Barrow, Hammond, Leighton, to which we may add Piscator and Beza, Scaliger, Ussher, etc., with Augustine and Bede of old, excluded from the passage any allusion to Christ's preaching after death. But he says that their view "is abandoned by modern interpreters as grammatically inconsistent with the plain meaning and construction of the language" (p. 138)! Now assuredly even the more learned of these moderns, as De Wette, Huther, Steiger, Weiss, Wiesinger, or their Anglo-Saxon followers, Drs. Alford and Christ. Wordsworth, possess no such oracular place. Happily he states what the grammatical inconsistency is. "There is no reference in the Greek, such as the A.V. implies, to the action of the Holy Spirit, but simply an antithesis between the lower and higher parts of Christ's human nature, between His flesh and His spirit; and this is brought out in the R.V." But the grammatical blunder is Dr. L.'s. For, to bear his view out, the Greek ought to have the article before *σὰρκι* as well as *πνεύματι*. Next confessedly the correct text is anarthrous on both sides, the statement being characteristic. Nor does the R.V. decide anything against referring to the Holy Spirit, save perhaps by their small "s." We can

certainly render more closely "in flesh" and perhaps may say "in Spirit." But even if English idiom prefers "in the Spirit," the true sense is not Christ's human spirit but "Spirit" *i.e.* of God, as already often shown.

Further, Dr. L. has not read Bishop Middleton aright. For M. asks, "What would happen, supposing the article authentic? Not that the passage would speak of the Holy Spirit [as Dr. L. fancies]: the sense would be, in *his* Spirit, viz., the spirit or mind of Christ, as John xiii. 21, and elsewhere." He does lay down the need of a preposition where anything is said to have been done or suffered by the Holy Spirit. But Dr. L. ought to know that this is unfounded. In Rom. viii. 14 we read of being "led by the Spirit of God"; yet there is no article and no preposition. Neither A.V. nor R.V. differs, nor any others known to me; nor do MSS., critics, or commentators raise a doubt. In Gal. iii. 3 we read, "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh," in A.V., or in R.V., "perfected in the flesh?" But both rightly regard it of the Holy Spirit; and yet there is no preposition any more than article. The Bishop's notion that it means no more than "spiritually" was a mere crotchet. The reader may compare to profit Gal. v. 16, 18, and 25. The context only confirms how truly the Holy Spirit is in question. His own view of the true meaning here too is anything but satisfactory, "dead carnally, but alive *spiritually*." This is doubly false; for it is neither ζῶν nor πνευματικῶς. Indeed through-

out his able treatise he fails as to the usage with prepositions, etc., and has misled many thereby. See how uncertain he is as to $\pi\nu$. in Rom. viii. and Gal. v., and so are the Revisers occasionally as to spirit or Spirit, as any attentive reader can see.

Then in p. 139 what a failure to reflect the drift of the passage! "He was put to death in the flesh, but in that He died, the Just for the unjust, not because He deserved death, but simply for well-doing," etc. What! not a word about its unique character to GOD's glory and for us! not a word about "once for sins"!

Dr. L. is absorbed in the mirage of His activity about the imprisoned spirits. "And if the men died impenitent, it cannot be but that He preached repentance and offered them salvation." Really the logic here is peculiar. Why cannot it but be? Does he not know that a large body of those holding the strange doctrine of Christ's preaching personally in hades regard it as announcing condemnation to the lost? Does he not know that the early fathers (as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian), the mediæval Schoolmen (not Thomas Aquinas), N. de Lyra, and some of the Reformers as Zwingli, held it to be His announcing salvation to the Old Testament saints? Luther, Peter Martyr, Bengel, etc., like the Romanists Suarez, Estius, and Bellarmine, adopted the imaginary idea that it speaks only of the unbelievers at the deluge believing at the last moment! Others, like Ambrose and Athanasius, Erasmus and Calvin, held that His preaching was to both saints and sinners! Logic

has as little as scripture to do with these conflicting hypotheses. They all neglect the grammar, the context, and the analogy of the faith generally.

He is a bold man who denies an allusion to Genesis vi. 3 in the apostle's words, especially remembering 1 Peter i. 11 and 2 Peter ii. 5, or excludes what Christ did in the Spirit's power of old, when His personal work is dwelt on. And why should not Peter use *πoρ*. figuratively in 19 and literally in 22, when we find Paul using *καθεύδωμεν* for moral sleep in 1 Thess. v. 6, and for the sleep of death in verse 10? Yea, the Lord Himself uses "dead" figuratively and literally in the same clause of Matt. viii. 22. The Holy Spirit looks for spiritual intelligence in a believer. "When thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light" (Luke xi. 34). What more inept than singling out of all the myriads of lost spirits the antediluvian sufferers through the flood for Christ's visit in either mercy or judgment? Especially as a plain design in the passage is to warn by the disobedient on the one hand, and by the few preserved in the ark on the other.

In his Second Epistle perishing in the flood, or in the fires of Sodom, is not all the doom of the ungodly: the Lord keeps for worse punishment in judgment-day. Does Peter contradict his First Epistle or its misinterpretation? It is utterly false that their doom seems out of proportion to their sins. The Lord Himself, the righteous Judge, warns that, as it was then, so it will again be in the days of the Son of man. Who and what are the men who dare in their self-sufficiency

to sit in judgment on GOD'S ways and on Christ's word? "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

In short the superficial impression, leading into "strange doctrine" all who yield to it, neglects the full connection of the words and clauses, the scope of the apostle's argument here, and the instruction given as to them in Gen. vi. and in 2 Peter ii. Noah's days are cited as the most striking testimony in the O.T. for publicity, patient continuance, and striking results. For the disobedient mass not only perished in the flood, but their spirits in custody await judgment (2 Peter ii.) as having despised that "preacher of righteousness." On the other hand stress is laid on the few who were preserved with Noah in the ark, not "by" water, but "through" that which destroyed all the rest. Hence it is not said (of these spirits), as by Dean A. and too many before and since, "which were once disobedient," but "disobedient as they once were." It is the moral reason why they are imprisoned, as all must be who refuse Christ's testimony by the Spirit now. "The very far-off allusion," to the fact that the Spirit of Christ (not His spirit as man) preached in Noah, is the most pertinent and powerful which the O.T. furnishes to warn against the perils of disobedience. For what did unbelievers care for One who only acts by the Spirit now, instead of reigning in visible glory and crushing opposition? By that Spirit Christ preached then; by the same Spirit He preaches now. And as so few, heeding Him, were

brought safely through then, beware lest you be among the many who disobey and perish to-day. What a comfort to the despised little flock who suffer for His Name!

How sad and humbling that one should need to speak of another pernicious book greedily received to-day. *Our Life after Death* has reached its forty-sixth edition! Notwithstanding its scientific show of propositions, deductions, and objections considered, it is mere froth covering deadly error, not without impiety. Much is made of "hades" according to Greeks, later Jews, and post-apostolic Christians, like Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, etc., deeply infected by heathen and heterodox thought. No real heed is paid to the full light of our Lord and His apostles.

Thus the Hebrew of Ps. xvi. 10 does not mean "in" but "to" sheol, nor imply a descent there, any more than Acts ii. 27 in the critical text (*εἰς ᾗδην*) of Alford, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Wordsworth, Westcott and Hort. So the R.V. rightly renders the Hebrew "Thou wilt not leave my soul *to* sheol," etc., though they wrongly translate the Greek as "*in*" instead of "unto" or "to." In dying our Lord commended His spirit into the hands of His Father, who is assuredly in heaven; and the converted robber, late as it might be, was that very day with Him in paradise (Luke xxiii.). Now we have already seen that, instead of being in hades, paradise is in heaven, and, as before remarked, its brightest part. One apostle connects it with "third heaven" (2 Cor. xii.

3, 4); and our Lord by another says He will give to him that overcometh (when glorified) to eat of the tree of life there, certainly not in hades (Rev. ii. 7). In the O.T. hades, like death, life, and incorruption, were left indefinite; but these things and more are brought to light through the gospel. Hence in the last parable of Luke xvi. our Lord represents the rich man, who had neither faith nor love, after death lifting up his eyes in hades, but believing Lazarus blessed with faithful Abraham. So great a gulf was fixed as to preclude crossing from either side. Hades was indeed "afar off"; and to be there is to be "in torments." Not a word is breathed that Lazarus was there; he was in Abraham's bosom. The parabolic converse in no way denies that the believing were comforted in heaven before resurrection, or that the self-seeking were in "this place of torment," though not yet in the lake of fire.

This error falsifies much scripture. Thus (p. 40) "it is quite certain that Christ did not go from the cross to heaven." This assumption he supports by John xx. 17; yet the text not only supposes the risen body but looks on to His ascension, and refutes the absurd "therefore" that the paradise in question was not heavenly.

We may pass over the misuse of 1 Peter iii. 18-20 as fully exposed in dealing with others, only noticing the inexcusable misconception which applies "the dead" in John v. 25 to the departed; whereas it expresses the common condition of fallen mankind, dead in trespasses

and sins (Eph. ii. 1, 5). "The hour coming, and now is" tells us what the Son of God is doing, ever since He came, by the gospel which quickens those that hear His voice. The blinding effect of preoccupation leads into the ditch. No Christian doubts the separate state, or what he calls "intermediate life"; none ought to doubt that the lost soul is at once tormented before the judgment, and that one saved when absent from the body is present with the Lord, which is assuredly in heaven, and not hades. Yet the resurrection of the righteous is not come, still less that of the unjust.

The reference to Rev. vi. 9 is unintelligent; for the reference to "the altar" is simply to indicate that in their martyrdom they offered up their souls for God's word and their testimony. In the very different verse 8 we hear of hades, not in verse 9. Saints await the vindication and rest of "that day," like others to suffer after them, as the Apocalypse shows elsewhere also. Intermediate "state," not "life," would be correct language.

The remarks in pp. 51-54 on 2 Cor. v. 1-8 and Phil. i. 23, 24 are an evasion, not an exposition, of the truth. The resurrection of the body is glorious for the Lord, and for His own at His coming; but to deny that saints on departure go to Christ in heaven, to imagine hades instead, is to contradict the scriptures before us. Not less unfounded is the reasoning on Heb. xii. 22, 23. A "perfecting" in the intermediate state is without God's word. Hades is not used in any of these texts: 2 Cor. xii. 2 expressly mentions

the "third heaven," in absolute contradiction of that hypothesis on the author's showing (p. 58).

From p. 100 is an advance into ever-deepening error. It is not universalism, but annihilation for the worst, and conditional immortality for any; it is not Romish purgatory, but one of the sceptical order for many who died in their sins, to whom is vainly promised salvation in hades. Did the Lord hold out any such hope in His parable? Did He not teach its impossibility? But the mind of Christ we have not in this book; nothing but perverted scripture and self-confident argument. What can one think of a man who could apply such passages as Heb. vi. 1; Rom. ii. 7; Eph. iv. 13; Phil. i. 6; iii. 12, etc., to progress and perfecting after death? For most of the race the "due time" of 1 Tim. ii. 6 must be the intermediate life!

What is it to deduce from ἀπολέσαι (Matt. x. 28) "cessation of being"? Was he so ignorant as not to know that a form of the word, rather stronger, is applied to the lost (ἀπολωλότα) sheep of the house of Israel in verse 6 of the same chapter? For the perfect participle implies the present result of a past act, wholly incompatible with extinction of being. They were living men when said to be "lost sheep." Annihilation is a falsehood of Buddhism, and a resource of incredulity, but a lie of the enemy, and unknown to scripture: even science repudiates its folly. The Lord here, as in Matt. xxv., teaches "*punishment* everlasting," and more solemnly still, if possible, in Mark ix. 42-49.

But the book is more guilty yet. What does this

rash man allow himself to say? "However hideously the thought misrepresents GOD, by making Him more cruel and remorseless than the vilest monster ever pictured by perverted imagination . . . this barbarous dogma of eternal torment is the only one we can consistently adopt if we start with the assumption that man is naturally immortal" (p. 140). Is he not as real a blasphemer as the scoffing T. Paine? He believes in prayers for the dead (pp. 179-188) no less than the darkest Romanist. These are necessary consequences of his wicked fable. If the Bible be thus twisted, the Litany and Occasional Prayers do not escape.

The GOD who gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, is "an unsympathetic Exactor," in too evil eyes, if His wrath abides on him who disbelieves! GOD is not "fair," if He gives not an opportunity after death—the GOD who sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins! Is it not a horror that one claiming to be a minister of the gospel should be its unblushing reviler? Alas! in these days it is a growing evil of which scripture has fully warned (2 Tim. iv. 3, 4; 2 Peter ii. 1, 2).

From an hypothesis, weird and murky in itself, alien from the assured bearing of revelation, barren of glory to GOD or of profit to man, fruitful only in encouraging spurious hopes, and in undermining GOD's incalculably grave warning against present insubjection to Himself and His word, what a blessed contrast we have in that which scripture does tell us unmistakably of Christ's closing scenes here below up to His resurrection! Four

detailed accounts have been furnished by the Holy Spirit, besides all-important additions in the Acts and the Apostolic Epistles. The first Gospel tells us of those hours on the cross of supernatural darkness, when the rejected Messiah expresses, according to the prediction of Ps. xxii., His sense of being abandoned by His GOD; and well we know why! It was for our sins. GOD made Him to be sin for us, as the apostle expounds it. And this the second Gospel presents from its picture of the righteous Servant completing His work of obedience even unto death, and that, death of the cross. The third Gospel, which brings into relief the perfect Man, the Son of Man yet withal Son of GOD, in all His human affections and sympathies but in absolute devotedness to GOD'S glory, lets us know that with a loud voice He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," and expired. The fourth Gospel is equally true to the Spirit's purpose in it of setting out the Eternal Word and Son become flesh, who of His own authority yet in obedience (John x. 18) could give up His spirit (an expression never used of another, and possible only to Him), after saying in His consciousness of Deity, "It is finished."

The environment and consequences were no less worthy and of inestimable value. For what meant the rending of the veil recorded by the three Synoptics, but that as GOD had come down to man in love, so now believing man can draw near to GOD in righteousness? If the first Gospel mentions the earth shaken, and the rocks rent, and the tombs opened, it takes care to add

that after Christ's resurrection many bodies of the saints that slept were raised, left the tombs, entered into the holy city, and appeared to many: a bright testimony to the victory after His atoning death, whereby the devil's might was annulled, and He Himself has the keys of death and of hades.

But not a whisper is insinuated here or elsewhere in all four Gospels of a visit (whether when disembodied, or when risen, for they differ widely) to hades or Tartarus (where believers could not be), to preach to unbelievers a message as unmeet for them then and there as the supposition of their repentance at the last moment is a baseless fable, irreconcilable with all that the text conveys. 1 Cor. xv. again expressly announces the gospel, but without a shadow of this pseudo-evangel; so it is with Eph. iv. and Phil. iii. The saving grace of GOD appeared here to all that sinned (Titus ii.). Hades knows "being in torments," not the gospel entering there to save those who paid no heed to GOD's word here. It is a "place of torment" for the wicked dead, though not the lake of fire; and there is a great gulf fixed between it and the blessed by faith in Abraham's bosom, which none from either side can pass. So our Lord has revealed. Can words more evidently and conclusively refute these unholy speculations?

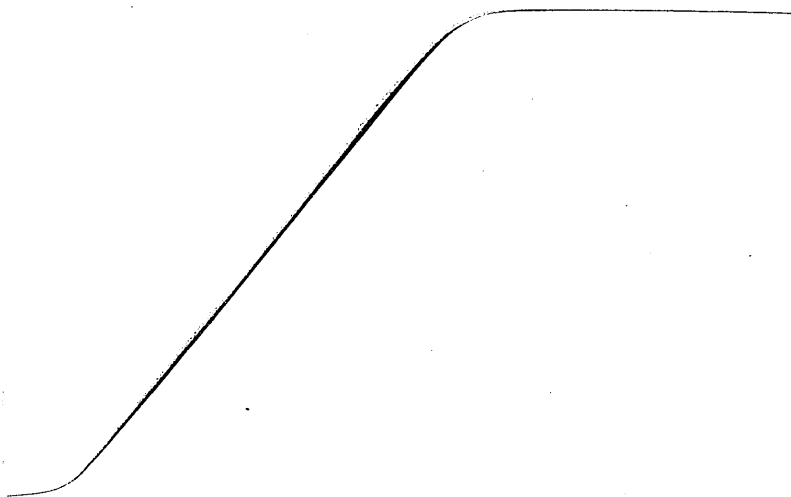
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